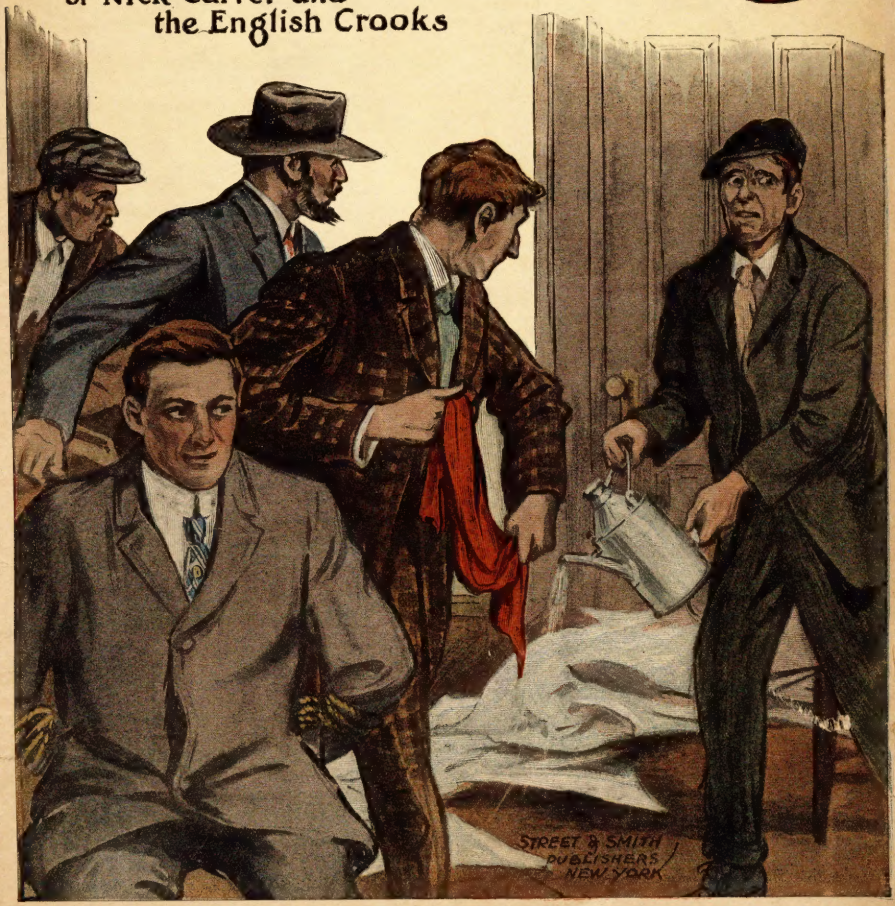
No. 80 MAR. 21, 1914 5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

THE UNKNOWN DEAD

or Nick Carter and the English Crooks



NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

Copyright, 1914, by STREET & SMITH. *O. G. Smith and G. C. Smith, Proprietors.*

Terms to NICK CARTER STORIES Mail Subscribers.
(Postage Free.)
Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

3 months	65c.	One year	$2.50
4 months	85c.	2 copies one year	4.00
6 months	$1.25	1 copy two years	4.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

No. 80. NEW YORK, March 21, 1914. **Price Five Cents.**

THE UNKNOWN DEAD;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE ENGLISH CROOKS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE ESCAPE.

Nick Carter tore open the yellow envelope of the telegram just brought into his business office by Joseph, his butler. The communication was from the Boston police headquarters, in Pemberton Square, and was signed by the chief of detectives.

It read:

"Ambrose Floyd has escaped. Blake will see you this evening. WATSON."

It then was two o'clock in the afternoon.

Nick read the message, then turned and gave it to his chief assistant, Chick Carter, who was writing at his desk.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, after reading it. "Floyd has made a get-away, eh?"

"Evidently."

"That's too bad, by Jove, after the trouble we had in landing him. He's a dangerous man to be at large. Escaped—that seems almost impossible."

"But that explains it," said Nick enigmatically.

"Explains what?"

"You don't remember?"

"No."

"We were in the courtroom, Chick, when he was sentenced to a long term in the Massachusetts State prison. When he heard his sentence, he looked at me and laughed audibly, quite derisively, in fact, as much as to say that he would not serve a tenth part of the term. He has served less than three months."

"I remember, now that you speak of it," said Chick. "You think he had, even then, some plan of escape in his mind?"

"I certainly do," Nick nodded. "He at that moment had something up his sleeve. I know him to be a slippery rascal, but I wouldn't have thought that he could slip through the bars of the Prison Point cage. Blake evidently is on his way here, and will hand us the particulars."

"That refers to Jerry Blake, I suppose, the Boston detective?"

"Yes. He is by long odds Chief Watson's best man," said Nick. "Other business must be sending him to New York. He would not come merely to inform me of Floyd's escape. It's no funeral of mine."

"All the same, Nick, I'm curious to know how he accomplished it," said Chick, resuming his writing.

The curiosity of both was relieved soon after eight o'clock that evening, when Detective Blake appeared at Nick's residence and was received in the latter's attractive library, where both Chick and Patsy Garvan were also seated, the last another of the detective's assistants.

Blake was a big, broad, burly man of fifty, with a full, open face, black eyes, and bushy black hair. He looked like a man of inexhaustible vitality, with the strength of a bull, and his sonorous voice was fairly gruff because of its volume.

"Watson sent me a wire, Jerry, saying you would call," remarked Nick, after Blake had greeted all hands and lighted one of the cigars from a box tendered him.

"Yes, he said he would do so." Blake nodded his huge head and dropped his burned match into the cuspidor. "I've been summoned to testify in the court of appeals, which necessitated my coming on here, and Watson thought I'd better drop in and see you."

"Glad you did," said Nick. "He also stated that Ambrose Floyd, the notorious forger, has escaped from prison."

"Yes, he's out," Blake replied, with a grimace. "Unless I miss my guess, Nick, it will be a devil of a time before we get him in again. The most shifty crook, in jail or out, has got nothing on Floyd. He's the limit."

"How did he accomplish it, Jerry?" Chick inquired. "I supposed your State prison officers, at least, were up to snuff. Did he break out, or——"

"Break out be hanged!" Blake gruffly interrupted. "No, Chick, he walked out."

"Walked out?"

"As coolly as if walking out of a church. He was handcuffed to a criminal-court sheriff, however, or so it was supposed, but that didn't go. Great guns! I should say not."

"What do you mean, Jerry," Nick inquired, with more interest. "Explain."

"Well, 'twas like this," Blake complied: "Floyd was sent up about three months ago, you remember, after you got him for those money-order forgeries. He has kept up a constant kick to the prison warden since his incarceration, insisting that certain evidence had been suppressed and that the true facts would not have warranted his conviction."

"Rot!" said Nick bluntly.

"Rot—of course 'twas rot," Blake readily agreed. "The crafty rascal was only paving the way to the trick he turned this morning. It was worked up in this way. Something like a week ago Floyd retained a young lawyer, named Dawson, who received permission from the prison warden to confer with his client. He put up a plausible story about having submitted additional evidence to Judge Gerry, of the superior criminal court, who had tried the case against Floyd and imposed his sentence."

"I remember," said Nick. "I know Judge Gerry very well."

"The warden suspected nothing, and allowed Dawson to talk with Floyd," Blake proceeded. "The lawyer called to see him several times during the week, always with a green baize bag under his arm and a bundle of documents in his hand. Incidentally, he gave it out to the warden and some of his deputies that Floyd might be taken into court again on a habeus-corpus writ, the judge having expressed a wish to question him before he would seriously consider reopening the case. There was nothing in any of that, of course, it being only a cock-and-bull story, but the warden did not inquire into the matter, not believing that it would ever come to a head."

"I don't much wonder at that Jerry," said Nick dryly.

"Nor did I," Blake allowed. "It served the rascal's purpose, nevertheless, enabling him to get by."

"How so?"

"Like this," said Blake tersely. "Soon after nine o'clock this morning the warden got a phone call purporting to come from a clerk of the Federal court, asking him to call at the post-office building at ten o'clock to plan for the transfer of a convict to the Atlanta penitentiary. The warden knew that such a step was under consideration, and the request did not surprise him."

"He complied with it, of course," said Nick, smiling expressively.

"Sure."

"The phone call was a fake, eh?"

"Nothing else."

"It was designed, of course, to get the warden out of the way," said Nick. "Floyd has turned that trick before. Go on, Jerry. What followed?"

"About half past nine, before the warden could have arrived at the post-office building and phoned a message to head off the scheme, two taxicabs pulled up at the gate and Lawyer Dawson and three officers entered the prison. It happened that they found a newly appointed deputy in charge, named Pratt, who was not quite up to suspecting the circumstances, and who fell for the story. It did sound pretty good, at that, with the backing it had," added Blake, with a gruff laugh.

"You refer to the officers?"

"Exactly. One wore the uniform of a court sheriff, plug hat, cockade, and all. The other two claimed to be plain-clothes men from police headquarters. They showed their badges to prove it."

"Humph!" Nick ejaculated.

"The sheriff produced a habeus-corpus writ bearing Judge Gerry's signature, and directing that Floyd should be delivered into the custody of the sheriff, that he might be brought before the court at ten o'clock this morning."

"And Pratt fell for that, did he?" asked Nick.

"Fell for it!" Blake echoed, with a snort. "Well, I should say so. He fell like a balloonist with a busted parachute at a county fair."

"I'm surprised," said Nick.

"As a matter of fact, however," Blake added: "Pratt happened to know Judge Gerry's signature perfectly well, and he did not question it, despite that all of the officers were strangers."

"I see."

"The presence of Floyd's lawyer, moreover, in view of his recent prediction that such a writ might be presented, further convinced Pratt that he should deliver the prisoner to them. He did so, all right, after the convict had hurriedly put on street garments, and Floyd walked out of the prison hitched to the wrist of one of the plain-clothes men. The entire party entered the two taxicabs—well, that's the last seen of them."

"No doubt," said Nick, a bit grimly. "The lawyer was an impostor, of course."

"Sure. The whole gang were impostors, in fact, and the trick had been carefully cut and dried. Dawson got all of the necessary facts enabling him to plan it with Floyd. He obtained a blank habeas-corpus writ, a copy of Judge Gerry's signature, and Floyd forged it to the writ during one of his supposed lawyer's visits."

"That's quite like him," Nick replied. "He has no equal with a pen. He is as crafty with his head, moreover, as with his hand. The trick is in line with much of his previous knavery. He knew when on trial, no doubt, that he had confederates in Boston who would aid him to escape, and that's why he gave me the laugh, when sentenced. The job was pulled off at ten this morning, Jerry, you say?"

"Yes, about that," Blake drawled, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "We got the report at headquarters soon after ten. I went out and got the particulars, but there was nothing doing. The gang had made the get-away and covered their tracks."

"Is the identity of any of them suspected?"

"Not a suspicion."

"Nor any clew worth mentioning?"

"Not one."

"The outlook, then, is not very promising?"

"Promising—I should say not," Blake gruffly declared. "It looks about as bright as a shore resort in a hard northeaster."

Nick laughed, but did not reply for a few moments. Then, looking up from the floor at which he had been thoughtfully gazing, he remarked, a bit oddly:

"I suppose Watson had some object in sending you to me with these particulars, Jerry."

"Well, I don't know," drawled the Boston detective.

"Does he expect me to round Floyd up again for him?"

"Oh, no, Nick, nothing like that," Blake quickly protested. "I'm sure he had no such thought in mind. He knows you're much too busy to bother with that rascal again. He only thought, seeing that I was coming on here, that I had better call and tell you all about it."

"I'm very glad you did, Jerry, though sorry that that miscreant is again at large," said Nick. "Watson is as well and hearty as ever, I suppose?"

Blake saw that Nick had deliberately turned the conversation into other channels, and he did not attempt to revive the subject. He remained about half an hour, discussing matters of mutual interest, then arose and departed.

"Tell that to the marines," said Nick, when alone with his assistants. "It's a good, safe gamble that Watson hoped I would say, right off the reel, that I would drop everything else and get out after Floyd."

"That's about the size of it," said Chick. "It would save Watson the trouble."

"Only one thing can start me after that knave again."

"If he should get in more of his knavish work?"

"Exactly."

"Gee!" exclaimed Patsy. "It will not be much like Ambrose Floyd to lie quiet. He'll soon get in some of his work, all right, unless his sand box has given out."

"Not much danger of the last, Patsy," said Nick. "I also think we soon shall hear from him, possibly within a month."

CHAPTER II.

A SCRAP OF PAPER.

Nick Carter was the first to notice it.

Hundreds might have seen it, probably had seen it, in fact, only to pass by it with hardly a conscious glance, receiving no such impression as that imparted to the sensitive mind of the famous detective, but leaving it lying where it had fallen, as indifferently as a thousand-and-one inconspicuous things are left lying in the city streets.

It was an irregular scrap of white paper. It had fallen from an open window on the seventh floor of a large, fashionable hotel in Park Avenue. It had fallen slowly on the still air of the afternoon. It had fluttered hither and thither while falling, as vacillating as had been the life of the poor, unfortunate woman who had started it on its way, and it had fallen in the gutter—as she had done.

In the gutter! Was it the irony of fate?

"Stop a moment," said Nick.

Both detectives had been sauntering down the avenue, then on their way home.

It was a month to a day subsequent to the extraordinary escape of Ambrose Floyd and the visit of Detective Blake. Turning back when Nick abruptly halted, and then approached the curbing, Chick inquired:

"What have you found?"

Nick was picking up the fragment of paper.

"Something others have failed to notice," he replied.

"Failed to notice?"

"Yes," said Nick, pointing to a small red spot near one corner of the paper. "Fresh blood has a bright hue, Chick, that I am quick to notice and seldom mistake. Why is a spot of blood on a scrap of paper that is otherwise clean?"

"By Jove, it is blood," said Chick. "It looks like a finger print."

"That of a woman's finger, too, by the size. Ah, here is some writing—or an apology for writing."

Nick had turned over the paper, and was inspecting the reverse side. It contained a few words written with a lead pencil. It was an almost illegible scrawl, with slanted, irregular lines, as if inscribed by one with failing sight and a hand tremulous with age—or palsied by approaching death.

The tragic import of it, moreover, together with its brevity and abrupt, unfinished ending, at once impressed Nick much more seriously.

It read:

"Help—suite four-twenty—bring a doctor. The cursed cur has killed me. Hurry—or I—am——"

That was all.

Standing at Nick's elbow, Chick also read the scrawled, irregular lines.

"Great Scott!" said he. "What do you make of that, Nick?"

Nick swung round and glanced up at the lofty face of the vast hotel.

"Can it be a hoax?" Chick added.

"Hardly, Chick, in view of the bloodstain."

"We'd better rush up to suite four-twenty, then, and——"

"Haste will be useless, I think," Nick interrupted, though both walked quickly toward the broad, main entrance of the building. "The bloodstain is perfectly dry. The dust on the paper shows that it has been lying in the street for some little time. If the writer was dying when this was written, she must have expired by this time. We'll soon find out."

Nick had entered the hotel office while speaking. He did not stop at the clerk's desk to make inquiries. He proceeded directly to the elevators, one of which was just about to ascend. It contained only a fashionably clad young lady and the operator.

"Suite four-twenty," said Nick, as the lift began to rise.

"Seventh floor, sir," said the man in charge.

The young lady heard them. Her face was partly averted, but she turned and looked quite curiously at Nick, with an expression of wonderment that the detective was quick to observe.

"Seven. Four-twenty on the right."

The announcement came in stereotyped phrases from the elevator man.

The young lady stepped into the corridor and turned to the left, walking quickly away.

"Keep an eye on her, Chick," Nick whispered, as they left the elevator. "Notice into which room she goes."

The instructions were hardly necessary. The young lady then was approaching the fourth door from the elevator, that of a suite overlooking the avenue. As she paused to unlock it, she turned again and gazed curiously after the detectives.

That she might not suspect him of lingering to watch her,

Chick had dropped his handkerchief, then turned back to pick it up. She immediately opened the door and vanished into the suite.

Nick, in the meantime, had arrived at that number—four-twenty. He tried the door and found it locked. A sharp knock brought no response. He attempted to peer through the keyhole, but could see nothing within.

"The dustplate is down," he said quietly, when Chick joined him. "There is no key in the lock, so I can quickly turn the trick."

Nick had produced a ring of small skeleton keys while speaking, with one of which he soon succeeded in opening the door. Both detectives immediately entered the suite.

A narrow hall led into an attractively furnished parlor. Adjoining the latter was a bedroom, with a small bathroom beyond. One glance into the parlor as he entered brought an exclamation from Nick.

"Too late, indeed! Death has done its work."

"Heavens!" Chick muttered. "What a scene."

On the floor near one of the windows lay the dead body of a woman. She had been repeatedly stabbed in the breast and neck. Her garments were saturated with blood, which stood in a great pool on the carpeted floor. One shoulder was touching the baseboard directly under the open window. Her right arm was outstretched upon the floor. A lead pencil had fallen from her hand. A closed book was lying near it.

On the sill of the open window, between the lace draperies festooned in silk cords, were several spots of blood, smooches from a gory hand, while others marred the wall directly below, long red marks of lax fingers dragged downward.

A chair, which evidently had stood near the window, was turned completely around and tipped partly over against a near side wall. The cloth cover of a center table was awry, pulled partly from the table, and one hanging fold of it was smeared with blood.

The woman was about thirty years old. She was clad in a fashionably made afternoon gown, which perfectly fitted her finely formed figure. Her features were regular, a firm chin, a thin-lipped mouth, evincing will power and possibly a streak of cruelty in her nature. Her eyes, then open and staring, twin mirrors of the horror that had filled the last moments of her lost life, were a deep shade of blue. Masses of wavy, yellow hair overhung her low brow. Plainly, she had been a striking, if not quite a handsome and fascinating, woman.

Nick Carter was accustomed to such scenes, to viewing the tragic side of life, and he took in with a few swift glances most of the features mentioned. He saw plainly that a brutal murder had been committed, and he took up with professional composure the work of solving the mystery and seeking the criminal.

"It's a bad mess," said he, glancing at Chick. "The woman has been dead for a couple of hours, at least, and nothing can be done for her. Close the corridor door and we'll size up the evidence before notifying Hannaford, the hotel manager. It can be quickly done."

Chick hastened to obey, remarking when he returned:

"Bad mess, Nick, is right. It spells murder in capital letters."

"Plainly. It is not difficult, however, to reconstruct the crime," said Nick, noting the significance of every detail of the scene. "A man committed the murder. No woman could have done it. That is confirmed, too, by the epithet applied to him on this scrap of paper. He is referred to as a cursed cur."

"True. That surely would not have been applied to a woman."

"Furthermore, the singular number is used. Plainly, then, there was but one assassin."

"True again," said Chick. "We have scored one point, at least. There seems to be no reasonable doubt that this woman wrote the scrap of paper and threw it from the window."

"Not the slightest doubt, Chick, in my opinion," Nick replied. "Let's reconstruct the crime from the beginning, as the evidence indicates."

"Cut loose."

"The man must have been an acquaintance, or a supposed friend, one whom she did not seriously fear, at least, and with whom she was seated here, or whom she voluntarily admitted. Otherwise, if she had apprehended anything of this kind, she would have guarded herself against it."

"Surely," Chick agreed.

"It will be useless at this stage to speculate upon the motive," Nick continued. "We first must deduce what we can from the superficial facts. She evidently was seated near the open window. The book on the floor indicates that she was reading, or had been doing so just before the assault. The pencil on the floor suggests that she had been making notes in the book, or had slipped it between the leaves where she had been reading, in order to keep the place. Both book and pencil fell from her hands when she was assaulted."

"That appears perfectly reasonable."

"The assault was not expected, or she would have put up a fight and there would be evidence of a struggle."

"There is none to speak of."

"It is safe to assume, I think, that the man approached her with some pretext, if even that was necessary, and that he then seized and throttled her from behind, preventing any outcry, and stabbing her repeatedly before she could put up any great struggle. The only evidence of any is the chair tipped back against the wall. Obviously, it is the one she occupied, for here are spots of blood on the back and cushion."

"That's as plain as twice two, Nick."

"She fell upon the floor between the table and the window, as appears in the quantity of blood on the carpet."

"Undoubtedly."

"Her assassin thought her dead and he fled as quickly as possible. Stop a bit," Nick abruptly disgressed, stepping through the bedroom and looking into the bathroom. "No, not quite as quickly as possible. He lingered long enough to wash his hands. They must have been covered with blood. Here are soiled towels on the rack and blood-stains on the marble lavatory."

"How, then, could the woman have written that scrap of paper?" inquired Chick, who had followed him to the door of the bathroom. "She is terribly stabbed, and must have bled to death within a few minutes. She certainly could not have written the paper and cast it from the window without being heard by the miscreant. The evidence shows that it required her utmost efforts to reach the window."

"True," Nick admitted. "But that is easily explained."

"How so?"

"The woman must have fainted, Chick, either from fright or exhaustion, and the man supposed her dead when he lowered her to the floor," Nick reasoned, returning to the parlor. "It would have taken him a few moments to wash his hands. He fled as quickly as possible, of course, for no sane man would have remained here longer than necessary. The woman revived sufficiently after his departure to write the few words and throw the fragment of paper from the window."

"By Jove, I guess you're right," said Chick. "That certainly appears to explain it."

"As you say," Nick added; "the evidence shows that it required her utmost efforts. She was nearly all in. Unless I am much mistaken—no, I am right. The scrap of paper is part of the flyleaf of the book."

Nick had picked up the book from the floor and opened the front cover. About half of the blank flyleaf had been torn out. The irregular edges of the scrap of paper, which Nick now quickly compared with the other, corresponded perfectly with the remaining part of the flyleaf.

"You're right again," Chick conceded. "There are marks of her bloody fingers, too, on the cover."

"It's easy to determine precisely what occurred here after the man's departure," Nick replied, replacing the book on the floor.

"How do you size it up?"

"The woman revived somewhat. She realized her condition and that death was near. She had not strength to rise, nor to make herself heard. She made a desperate effort to drag herself across the room and reach the push button on the wall, or the room telephone which hangs near it."

"I see."

"That appears in the smooches of blood on the carpet near the table, left by her hands when she strove to draw herself along the floor. Notice, too, that the table cover is drawn in this direction, and that this fold near the floor is smeared with blood. She grasped it with her soiled hands when she strove to rise."

"Surely. You're getting down to first principles, Nick."

"Failing," Nick added, "she fell back and probably saw the book and pencil. She tore out part of the flyleaf and wrote these few words. She could not write more. She felt herself going. With a last desperate effort, she drew herself up sufficiently to cast the paper from the window."

"Plainly," Chick nodded. "That appears in the marks of her soiled hands on the sill."

"And on the wall below it, as well as her position against the baseboard," Nick added. "Her hand left this long smooch on the wall then she slipped back upon the floor. The last ounce of strength had left her. Take it from me, Chick, she was dead a moment later."

"The evidence certainly warrants all of your deductions," said Chick confidently. "I think you have sized it up correctly."

"I haven't a doubt of it."

"But who is this woman? Who killed her? Why——"

"We now will seek answers for those questions," Nick interrupted, approaching the telephone communicating with the hotel office. "I will call Hannaford up here. I am well acquainted with him. He has been the house manager for several years. He must know this woman, and he may be able to shed a little light upon the crime."

CHAPTER III.

THE UNKNOWN DEAD.

It had taken Nick Carter only a few minutes to size up the superficial evidence and arrive at the conclusions mentioned. Nor was Mr. Hannaford long in putting in an appearance after receiving the detective's telephone request, despite that none of the circumstances had been stated.

His horror and dismay upon beholding the scene and finding the two detectives there may be imagined. He recoiled from the shocking picture, uttering a cry, and Nick said quickly:

"Now, Hannaford, don't lose your head. This woman has been murdered. Her assassin has fled. Pull yourself together, therefore, and I'll tell you how I happened to be here and what little I have learned. There will be nothing in making a stir over it; quite the contrary."

Nick's influence at such a time was irresistible. Mr. Hannaford, who was a portly, dignified man in the fifties, quickly composed himself, and listened to what the detective imparted, which consisted merely of an explanation of his presence and how he regarded the crime. It did not include many of his deductions, however, Nick having decided to look deeper into the case before disclosing his suspicions.

"Now, Hannaford, what information can you give me?" he inquired, when concluding. "Who is this woman, and what do you know about her?"

"Very little indeed," Hannaford responded gravely. "Her name, or that with which she registered, is Mrs. Maud Fanfarlie."

"Has she been here before?"

"Never, Nick, to my knowledge. She was an entire stranger."

"You questioned her?"

"Certainly, as I always do under such circumstances. She stated that she was a widow, that she lost her husband about a year ago in Seattle, where she had been living, and that she had come to New York to make personal inquiries about some investments. That led me to infer that she had inherited property, and was a woman of means."

"And that satisfied you?"

"Yes. I made no further inquiries."

"How long has she been here?"

"About two weeks."

"Has her conduct confirmed her story? Has she been doing business with any bankers or brokers?"

"I think so, but I am not sure."

"See if you can find any evidence of it, Chick," Nick directed. "Look in her desk and in the table drawers. There may be statements, letters, or papers of some kind that will corroborate her story, or shed a little light upon her. Did she employ a maid, Hannaford?"

"No. She has been living alone here."

"Has she been receiving any mail, or visitors?"

"No, mail, Nick," said Hannaford confidently. "I don't recall having seen a single letter addressed to her. Her only visitor, moreover, so far as I know, has been a man whom she introduced to me as her cousin."

"Ah! What name?"

"The same as hers—Mr. Fanfarlie."

"Did you get his first name?"

"I did not."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"No, nothing," Hannaford admitted. "He has frequently called on her during the day, but I have not known of his being here later than dinner. I met him to speak to only when we were introduced. He nearly always came in the side door, went directly to the elevator, then up to this room. He appeared to be very much of a gentleman, though exceedingly reserved."

"He'll be reserved after this, all right," Nick said dryly. "Describe him."

"He is a man of medium build and good figure. He dresses well. He appears to be about forty. He is of light complexion, with nearly red hair. He wears gold-bowed spectacles, also a mustache and square-trimmed beard."

"That smacks of a disguise."

"If he was in disguise, I did not detect it, nor even suspect it. He looks like a professional man, an artist, a tutor, or a physician."

"A professional crook would, I think, hit nearer the mark," said Nick. "Can you tell me anything more about him?"

"No, I regret to say."

"Did he ever bring a companion when calling upon this woman?"

"I think not. He always came alone."

"Did he employ a cab, or a taxi?"

"I cannot say. I don't know that I ever saw him before he entered the house."

"We may be able to trace him," said Nick. "How about this woman, Hannaford? Was she an agreeable person?"

"Very. She was quite fascinating, in fact, and appeared to be a woman of taste and refinement."

Nick glanced at the scrap of paper still in his hand, then folded it a bit impatiently and thrust it into his pocket. Turning to Chick he said shortly:

"What do you find?"

"Nothing doing," Chick replied, rising from a desk in one corner of the room. "There are no letters, brokers' statements, nor a line of any significance. I can find only a few paid bills, all made out to Mrs. Maud Fanfarlie. Those, and some writing materials, are all that the desk contains. The table drawers are empty."

"I don't like the looks of it," said Nick bluntly. "There's a reason for it. Will you kindly step to the elevator, Mr. Hannaford, and find out whether Fanfarlie has been here to-day? If so, at what time he came and went, and whether he was alone."

"Certainly," Hannaford readily assented, turning to leave the room.

"Say nothing about the crime, please, until I have ended my investigations," Nick added.

"Very well. I will inform you as quickly as possible."

With Chick assisting him, Nick then began a thorough inspection of the dead woman's wardrobe. None of her garments bore any marks or initials, even the business card of the makers having been removed.

A trunk that stood in the bedroom closet, moreover, was nearly new, and without a name or initial painted on it. It bore no express labels, nor were there any transportation stickers indicating that it had ever been shipped any distance.

"There is something back of this," said Nick, crouching on the threshold of the closet door to examine the trunk. "Not one woman in a hundred leaves her garments unmarked, Chick, unless with some special reason. This woman had a reason, an evil reason, too, unless I am much mistaken."

"You suspect——"

"I'll inform you a little later," Nick interrupted. "H'm, what's this? She evidently was out in the rain last evening, caught in that sharp shower about ten o'clock. Well, well, this may supply a clew. Outline this sole and heel on a sheet of paper, Chick, and slip it into your pocket. We may find it useful a little later."

Nick handed Chick one of a pair of button boots which he had found on the closet floor. The soles and uppers of both were quite damp. On both, moreover, Nick had discovered green stains and tiny particles of mashed grass, which had occasioned his remarks.

Chick hastened to outline the boot as requested, and then returned it to the closet.

In the meantime Nick made a brief examination of the body, the several wounds, the woman's pocket, which he found to contain only a plain linen handkerchief. He examined her hands and fingers, inspecting the nails with a lens, all the while with brows knitting and with his lips more firmly compressed. Finally, somewhat to Chick's surprise, Nick pulled several hairs from the woman's head, which he also examined with his magnifying glass.

Before Chick could ask the question that arose in his mind, however, Hannaford hurriedly returned to the room, and Nick turned to meet him.

"I fear you are on the wrong scent, Carter," were Hannaford's first words. "I have questioned each of the elevator men, all of whom know Fanfarlie by sight. He has not been here to-day."

"You mean, Hannaford, that the elevator men have not seen him," corrected Nick dryly.

"They have eyes. He certainly could not have come up here without being seen by one of them."

"Unless he walked up the stairs."

"Few men choose to climb seven flights of stairs, Nick, when there is an elevator handy," Hannaford argued.

"Few men with a murder in view, Hannaford, would choose the elevator," Nick pointedly replied. "He could have come up the stairs without being seen, couldn't he?"

"Well, possibly."

"I thought so," said Nick; and he then surprised Chick by adding: "Be that as it may, however, I will leave this scrap of paper with you, Hannaford, and ask you to hand it to the police. You may inform them how it came into my possession, and what I have done here."

"You're not going?"

"Yes, presently. I am not in a position just now to continue my work on the case, nor to take it on exclusively for investigation. You had better call in the house physician and notify the central office. Later, unless the police solve the mystery, I will do what I can to aid them."

Hannaford looked surprised and disappointed. He accepted the scrap of paper, nevertheless, saying regretfully:

"I'm sorry to hear this, Nick, for I think you are the one man likely to discover the truth, and possibly the criminal."

"Oh, I'm not entirely out of the running," replied Nick. "I have other important business this afternoon, however, and cannot consistently neglect it. Let the police take

charge here. Notify them immediately, Hannaford, and they will do the rest. I will see to closing the suite until they arrive."

Hannaford was hurrying out of the room and hastening for the hotel office.

Nick glanced once more at the murdered woman, then led the way into the corridor, and closed the door.

"Knock at the adjoining suite, Chick, and find out whether any disturbance has been heard in this one," he directed. "We may perhaps learn exactly the time of the crime. I'll inquire at the suite on the opposite side."

Both inquiries proved to be futile. No disturbance had been heard. No information could be obtained. The occupants of neither adjoining suite had more than a bowing acquaintance with Mrs. Fanfarlie.

These negative facts were learned without disclosing the murder, and Nick then hastened to that occupied by the young lady seen in the elevator. A knock brought her to the door.

"Pardon me for disturbing you," Nick said politely, noting her look of mingled surprise and inquiry. "I am a detective, and wish you to answer a question."

"A detective?" echoed the woman. "A question? Concerning what, sir?"

"About Mrs. Fanfarlie, who has a suite on this floor. Are you acquainted with her?"

The young lady shrugged her shoulders, and frowned slightly.

"No, indeed, sir," she replied, with quite expressive coldness. "I have never spoken to her. I know nothing about her."

"May I ask, then," said Nick, "why you looked at me so quickly in the elevator when I mentioned the number of her suite, as if you wondered why I was going there?"

"Because that is precisely what I did wonder," said the woman frankly. "I do not care to explain, however, nor to discuss any person who——"

"Pardon me," Nick politely interrupted. "Mrs. Fanfarlie is dead. She has been murdered."

"Murdered! Dear me, how terrible! When, and where?"

"You will learn later. If you can give me any information about her——"

"I cannot," said the woman quickly. "I know absolutely nothing about her. My reason for looking at you in the elevator was because I have seen another man going up to her suite, a man with red hair and beard. I admit that I have seen no other, but your inquiry as to the location of her suite led me to wonder how many male acquaintances she was favored with. She lives alone there, and—well, I like to feel that I am in a strictly respectable house. I think you understand me."

Nick did understand her. He saw, moreover, that she had told him the truth, and was concealing nothing. He thanked her, then bowed and departed.

"Now, Chick, one more call and then we'll be off," said he, while they hastened to the elevator.

"This don't look very much, Nick, as if you had dropped the case," said Chick, a bit puzzled.

"Nor have I."

"Why, then, have you turned it over to the police?"

"For two reasons," Nick explained. "One, because I wish to spend no time in looking after the many legal steps that are immediately necessary. I can use the time to better advantage."

"There is something in that."

"Another, because I want the knave who did this job to suppose that I have ended my investigations. The newspapers will inform him to that effect."

"You have made discoveries, then, which——"

"Impel me to sift it to the bottom—exactly," said Nick, interrupting. "I'll explain a little later. There is too much to be told with a breath. Here we are."

They had arrived at the ground floor, and Nick then led the way to a small room near the office. It was occupied by an attractive girl of nineteen, who earned her living as a manicure. Nick found her disengaged.

"You are patronized by many of the hotel guests, aren't you?" he inquired, by way of introduction.

"Yes, indeed, sir," smiled the girl, thinking she had a customer.

"Are you acquainted with Mrs. Fanfarlie, on the seventh floor?"

"I am, sir."

"You did some work for her this morning, didn't you?"

"I did, sir, about nine o'clock. She stopped in here when she came out from breakfast."

"How long were you at work on her nails?"

"About fifteen minutes."

"Was she as well as usual? How did she appear to you?"

"Why do you question me about her?" demanded the girl, frowning slightly. "I do not care to talk about the guests, nor any person who patronizes——"

Nick checked her with a gesture, displaying his official badge.

"I am a detective," he said quietly. "You must answer me. You will learn a little later why it is very necessary. Did you observe anything unusual in Mrs. Fanfarlie? Did she appear to be nervous, or serious, or unusually thoughtful?"

The girl had become more grave, evidently apprehending that a crime had been committed, and she now responded readily.

"She appeared out of sorts, sir, as if something had disturbed her," she replied.

"Did she say anything about it?" Nick inquired.

"Well, sir, I noticed that her hand was unsteady, and I asked her if she was feeling nervous. She replied that she was not, then added that she was on fire inside."

"Do you know what she meant by that?"

"I inferred that she was very angry about something. She spoke with intense bitterness, and—well, she had a terrible look in her eyes for a moment."

"A vengeful look?"

"Yes, sir, that is how it impressed me," said the girl. "She almost frightened me for a moment. She looked as if she could have killed some one."

"Did she mention the cause?"

"No, sir."

"Or any names?"

"None, sir."

"Did she say anything more?"

The girl hesitated for a moment, then replied

"Well, sir, she said that it was all on account of a man. One cannot trust the best of them, much less the worst, she added. That is all she said, sir, and all I observed."

Nick thanked the girl, and turned to go.

"Much less the worst, eh?" he remarked to Chick, who

had been listening. "Those few words are very significant. It is quite in line with what I have been led to suspect. Now, Chick, we'll head for home."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEDUCTIVE ART.

Nick Carter did not say precisely what he suspected until early that evening, after having had time to consider the matter, and to read what the newspapers published about the crime, as given to them by the police. It is needless to say that they added nothing to what he personally had learned.

Seven o'clock found Nick, Chick, and Patsy Garvan seated in the detective's library, smoking their after-dinner cigars. Though the case had been discussed during the dinner, and Patsy informed of most of the circumstances, Nick had not stated definitely how he regarded it.

"I see that police headquarters has communicated with the Seattle police concerning Mrs. Fanfarlie," said Chick, looking up from the newspaper he had been reading. "No such woman is known there, nor does the death record for more than a year, which covers the time when she claims to have lost her husband, show the death of a man named Fanfarlie."

"That does not surprise me," said Nick.

"Nor me, chief," put in Patsy. "It's long odds that she never had a husband."

"A ten-to-one shot, Patsy, at least," Nick agreed.

"Sure thing, chief."

"But why do you feel so sure of it, Nick?" Chick inquired, laying aside the newspaper. "What have you discovered that is so convincing?"

"Much," Nick said tersely. "The woman's story is a tissue of lies. It will not stand washing. It's so thin that one could shoot peas through it with a boy's blowpipe. Her name is not Fanfarlie, though we will continue to use it until we discover her true name."

"Put us wise," said Chick. "How do you size her up?"

"Quite the contrary to Hannaford's estimate," said the detective, smiling. "He thought her a woman of taste and refinement. I think she was a clever crook."

"A crook, eh?"

"Nothing else. Also that she was engaged in a scheme that in some way has miscarried."

"But——"

"Listen to me for a few moments," Nick interrupted. "I'll tell you very quickly on what I base my suspicion."

"Go ahead. I'm all ears," said Chick.

"To begin with," Nick proceeded; "she arrived here a total stranger, claiming to have come from one of the most remote cities of the country, too remote for Hannaford to have taken the trouble to attempt verifying her statements. She got into a first-class hotel, therefore, which would serve in a measure to give her character and standing with any persons with whom she might undertake to do business, even though her ultimate design was to perpetrate a swindle."

"I admit that, Nick, as far as it goes."

"The police have learned that she has called on a number of bankers and brokers, chief, with whom she discussed the purchase of some stocks and the sale of some bonds she claimed to have," said Patsy. "I read that in the *Star*."

"I saw it, Patsy," Nick replied. "Since no swindle has been reported, it's odds that this woman's designs had not matured. We may learn later of what they consisted."

"Go on, Nick. What more?"

"To continue, then, she has made an obvious attempt to hide her identity, as well as where she came from," Nick proceeded. "She has posed as a woman of means and refinement, according to Hannaford, but several facts convince me that she was quite the contrary."

"What facts?"

"One, the epithet applied to her assailant. She referred to him as a cursed cur."

"Not elegant, Nick, I'll admit."

"Worse than inelegant, Chick. It smacks of the underworld. In spite of the tragic circumstances, no woman of true refinement would have used that adjective. She might have termed him a cowardly, cruel, or knavish cur, but not a cursed cur. That stamps her a woman of low character."

"Well, yes, so it does," Chick allowed.

"It also indicates that her assailant is of the same class. A woman in her dying condition and frame of mind would surely apply a precise and proper epithet. We may safely assume that Fanfarlie, so called, is a cur capable of any cursed kind of work."

"Gee! that's right, chief," said Patsy. "It's a safe gamble."

"That, moreover, was the woman's opinion of him even before the crime," Nick added. "It appears in her bitter reference to him, as well as in her vengeful look, when replying to the manicure girl. She remarked that the best of men cannot be trusted, much less the worst. Worst is the superlative of bad. In her opinion, then, he not only was a bad man, but a very bad one. She was thinking of him while the girl was at work on her nails."

"What started you on that scent?" Chick inquired. "How did you know she had visited the manicure this morning?"

"Her nails told me so," Nick explained. "They had been very recently manicured. She could not have done the work herself, however, for there were no utensils in her room. Most likely, therefore, she had patronized the manicure in the house."

"Good work!" said Chick approvingly. "You certainly ran down one significant point. I begin to think you are right."

"I discovered another, also."

"Namely?"

"The woman's hair is bleached," said Nick. "I pulled out several hairs and examined them with my lens. They were dark near the roots, where they had grown out a little since the bleaching."

"Well, well; that's significant, also."

"Decidedly so. Women of refinement don't bleach their hair. This woman had hers bleached, Chick, both to help hide her identity and to prevent subsequent detection by having it restored to its dark color."

"After having perpetrated the swindle which you think she was framing up?"

"Exactly."

"In view of the other evidence and circumstances, Nick, I quite agree with you," Chick now declared. "The woman undoubtedly was a crook."

"Also her associate, Fanfarlie, since birds of a feather flock together."

"Right. His identity, moreover, is as great a mystery

as her own. The papers state that the police can find no trace of him."

"Nor are they likely to, Chick, under that name."

"True."

"Now, having determined the character of the couple, let's go a step farther," said Nick. "The motive for the murder is beyond immediate discovery, and it is useless at this time to speculate upon it. The evidence shows, however, that something occurred last evening which led up to the murder."

"Last evening?"

"Yes. There is no reason for suspecting any previous animosity between the couple."

"None that I know of, Nick, surely."

"What occurred last evening, then, is the question," Nick continued. "The woman was away from the hotel. Her boots and some of her skirts show that she was caught in a shower. It rained hard about ten o'clock for nearly half an hour. Mrs. Fanfarlie had an umbrella, but no rubbers. The umbrella, still very damp, was in her bedroom closet."

"I saw it," Chick nodded.

"On both damp boots were green stains and particles of grass, showing plainly that she had walked over a wet lawn. This, in turn, gives rise to other questions. Whose lawn was it? Where was this woman at ten o'clock last evening, and why was she playing the spy?"

"Playing the spy?"

"Exactly."

"Why do you think that?" Chick demanded. "She may have walked over the grass in one of the parks."

"Not so," Nick quickly objected. "A woman provided with an umbrella to protect her hat and garments, but having no rubbers, would have stuck to the gravel paths. She would not have walked in the wet grass."

"But why do you think she was playing the spy?"

"I'll tell you why," said Nick earnestly. "It thundered for nearly a quarter hour before it began to rain. Any sane person would have known that it was going to rain hard, and would have sought shelter. This woman did not do so. She had some reason for remaining out-of-doors even after the storm began. It is not reasonable to suppose that she was in any grass-grown suburban district after ten o'clock, where she could not have found shelter, or a conveyance home, during the quarter hour preceding the storm. Women run for cover at such times —but not this woman."

"You suspect, then——"

"Take it from me, Chick," interrupted Nick confidently, "the grass in which this woman walked was on somebody's lawn. She was either watching the house, or listening at a window. What she saw or heard was of sufficient importance to her to cause her to ignore the fierce rain with which the storm finally broke. She remained to watch, or to listen.

"Now, in view of her bitterness this morning, her vengeful look, her remarks to the manicure girl, her murder within an hour or two, and her almost profane reference to the man who killed her—in the light of all this, it's dollars to doughnuts that her assassin not only was the one man known to have called on her in the hotel, but also that he either dwells in the house she had under espionage, or was a visitor there last evening. What she saw or overheard, moreover, caused an altercation between the couple this morning, resulting in the woman's violent death."

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Patsy. "That listens right to me, chief. I'll bet a few bones that it hits close to the mark."

"It is, indeed, a very reasonable theory," Chick also admitted. "If the correct one, Nick, there must be some way by which the woman's movements after she left the hotel last evening can be traced, the dwelling located and her assailant identified. What do you intend doing about it?"

"Nothing—until after the police have got in their work."

"The police?"

"They'll keep busy for a day or two," said Nick. "We'll wait and see what they unearth. They may ferret out something definite about the couple."

"Possibly."

"I have still another reason," Nick added.

"Namely?"

"If a swindle, or a felony of any kind is being framed up, in which Mrs. Fanfarlie was playing a part, her murder may not hold up the game."

"That's right, too."

"The killing of the woman may for some reason have become necessary," Nick added. "We'll wait a day or two and watch out for any swindle in which she might reasonably have figured. Though we cannot anticipate and prevent it, I have a hunch that it will soon be forthcoming."

Nick's prediction proved to be correct.

It was on Monday, between the hours of nine and one o'clock, that the murder had been committed. The following day brought no additional discoveries, and the newspapers on Wednesday morning announced that the vigorous efforts of the police still were proving futile.

The mystery, in fact, seemed to grow deeper and darker. Descriptions of the woman were sent broadcast throughout the country, but the authorities were as far as ever from establishing her identity.

A growing impression prevailed that she was a woman of wealth, culture, and social standing, in view of which, and the utter inability of the police to discover anything definite about her, who she was, where she came from, or why she was alone in the hotel, had led an imaginative reporter on one of the sensational newspapers to term her, not inappropriately—the woman of mystery.

The term appeared to hit the public, for it was promptly seized upon, and from that moment, in high life and low, her fictitious name was very generally dropped, and she became, as indeed she was—the woman of mystery.

Low enough she had fallen and was lying—on a cold marble slab in the East Twenty-sixth Street morgue.

Her assailant, red-handed, still was at large, with his identity shrouded in darkness as deep as that involving all save—the fate of the woman.

On Wednesday morning at ten o'clock, while Nick Carter and his two assistants were engaged with an unusually heavy mail, and incidentally discussing the case, the telephone on Nick's desk rang so insistently that he remarked, when turning to pick up the instrument:

"That sounds like an emergency call."

It proved to be one.

"Hello!" said Nick, placing the receiver to his ear.

"Um—um—ump! Um—um!"

"What's that?" cried Nick. "Stand back a little and speak plainly. What do you say?"

"Hello!" came the reply, more distinctly, but in great excitement. "I want Nick Carter—hurry!"

"Carter is talking."

"Thank Heaven! I am Charles Chester, cashier of the South National Bank, in Broad Street. Come at once. We have been swindled out of half a million in cold cash. Crooks got away with the money twenty minutes ago. Will you come at once?"

"I will be there in twenty minutes."

Nick replied on the instant. He was well acquainted with the bank's president, Cyrus Benton, while the venerable Mr. Chester was a personal friend. Both were familiar figures in the financial district, and the bank was one of the largest and strongest in that money center of the country.

"What's up?" Chick inquired, having heard the detective's reply.

"Get your hats," said Nick, rising. "Ring for Danny and the touring car, Patsy. Tell him to move lively. The South National Bank has been robbed of half a million."

"The devil you say!" cried Chick. "Cash?"

"Yes."

"Great Scott! This looks, Nick, as if you had read the future. I refer to your hunch in the Fanfarlie case. This may prove to be the connecting link."

"Possibly. We'll lose no time in looking into it."

"Half a million in cash!" Patsy exclaimed. "Gee! that's a big bundle of money—too big to be carried in one's vest pocket. It would fill a wagon with dollar notes. There must have been some fine work done for fair."

CHAPTER V.

AN AMAZING ROBBERY.

"I telephoned to you, Nick, the moment I discovered the swindle," said Mr. Chester, when Nick Carter and his assistants entered the inclosure of the South National Bank and were being conducted into the directors' room by the cashier.

"Yes, I heard you," Nick replied, a bit dryly, recalling the inarticulate communication that first came over the wire.

"It's terrible—terrible! It will not cripple us, of course, but half a million is big money to lose through the knavery of a gang of crooks. The worst of it is——"

"Now, Mr. Chester, stop just one moment," Nick interrupted.

"Well?"

"You are very excited. That won't do at all," said Nick. "You must be calm in order to tell me the exact circumstances. I'll get the crooks and recover the half million, if it can possibly be done, but I first must know just what has occurred here. Now, sir, begin at the beginning and tell me a calm, connected story."

Nick had, while speaking, gently pushed the elderly man into one of the leather-covered chairs near the huge table used by the directors during their business meetings.

Lying on it was a batch of bonds and an open letter.

Nick merely glanced at them, and took another chair, while Chick and Patsy waited near by. The only other occupant of the room was one of the bookkeepers, Nelson Blair. He looked pale, awe-eyed, and anxious, as Nick had observed that the tellers and clerks outside were also looking. Plainly enough, an extraordinary robbery had been committed.

Mr. Chester, under the detective's influence, now stated the circumstances quickly and calmly. It appeared that the bank had been opened at the usual hour, and that President Benton had come in and entered his private office at half past nine, his usal time for arriving, and at once had begun to open and read his morning mail.

Ten minutes later a taxicab stopped at the main door of the bank. A policeman occupied the seat next to the chauffeur. Inside were two men of highly respectable appearance, both of whom entered the bank, each carrying a large leather bag, and going directly to the president's private office.

A few moments later President Benton rang for a boy, and requested the cashier to step to his door.

"I did so at once," said Mr. Chester, proceeding with his story. "Mr. Benton was seated at his roll-top desk. He was reading a letter evidently brought by one of the two men, who stood waiting for him. On his table was a quantity of bonds, those now lying before you."

"I follow you," Nick nodded. "What did Benton want of you?"

"He informed me briefly that President Hart, of the Midway Trust Company, in Broadway had met him this morning and requested a loan of half a million, stating that he had heavy disbursements to-day, and needed more cash than they had in their vault. Benton added that he had consented to accommodate him, and that Hart had sent the two messengers with a letter, and bonds adequate to cover the loan. He directed me to deliver half a million in hundreds, fifties, and twenties to the two men."

"You did so, of course," Nick remarked.

"Certainly," said Mr. Chester. "No thought of fraud even entered my head."

"Naturally not."

"It took only a few minutes to count out the packages of money, and one of our clerks then helped the two messengers take it out to the taxicab. I saw the policeman on the seat, and supposed they were well protected, and that everything was all right."

"It appeared to be so, Chester, I admit."

"The taxicab left immediately," added the cashier. "Five minutes later President Benton went out with a friend, and he has not returned. He did not say where he was going, so I cannot send for him."

"How did you discover the fraud?" Nick inquired.

"Purely by chance," Mr. Chester replied. "A gentleman came in who stated that he wanted to see Benton on very important business."

"Do you know him?" Nick interposed.

"Only by sight. He has been here before, however, to see Benton."

"Go on."

"I told him he was out. He then asked whether I knew where he could be reached by telephone. I thought that Benton very possibly had gone to the Midway Trust Company, so I called up President Hart, and inquired. I then learned not only that Benton was not there, but also that Hart had not seen him this morning, nor asked him for any loan."

"Yes, yes, I see," said the detective.

"I then rushed into Benton's private office, where the bonds left for collateral still remained. Half of the amount is apparently covered by National Telephone

bonds, and the other by convertible bonds of the Northern Traction Company. Both, when genuine, are gilt-edged securities."

"I infer, then, that the bonds are forgeries," said Nick.

"Undoubtedly," cried Mr. Chester. "I have telephoned to the office of both companies, stating the circumstances and describing the bonds, and have learned that they are spurious, absolutely worthless. They are here on the table, also the letter brought by the supposed messenger from the trust company."

Nick picked up the letter and read it. It was typewritten on a single sheet, bearing the heading of the Midway Trust Company, and it read as follows:

"My Dear Benton: I am sending two messengers, Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Tobey, with bonds to cover the loan requested. Will you kindly deliver them the cash in hundreds, fifties, and twenties. I have an adequate supply of smaller notes. Thanking you for the favor, yours most respectfully, Jason Hart."

"Superficially, Chester, it looks as if President Benton has been very cleverly swindled," said Nick, tossing the letter on the table.

"Superficially——"

"One moment, please, while I examine the bonds. I then will discuss the matter with you."

Nick examined several of each company. He saw at a glance that they were remarkably well executed, the lathe work exceedingly well done. The same was true of the signatures, several of which he compared by letting the light from a window strike through them, which enabled him to determine that they were not tracings, but had been written offhand with a pen.

Turning to Chick and Patsy, both of whom had joined him near the window and also examined several of the bonds, he remarked quietly:

"I know of only one man who can do such clever work."

"Ambrose Floyd," said Chick.

"The same."

"By Jove, it looks like him, chief," said Patsy. "Gee! he's lost no time in getting in his work. He has been out only a month."

"I think I smell a rat," said Nick pointedly.

"Floyd is a rat, all right," Chick muttered. "What do you mean, Nick?"

"This job was under way as long ago as we arrested and convicted Floyd for those money-order forgeries," Nick explained. "He laughed at me when sentenced. His plan of escape even then had been laid, and the confederates who aided him, impersonating a Boston lawyer, a court sheriff, and two detectives, were the gang who have pulled off this job."

"By Jove! that's more than probable."

"They are a gang of clever counterfeiters," added Nick confidently. "This lathe work is almost as good as the government experts produce. The rascals needed Floyd, however, to counterfeit these pen-written signatures so perfectly. He has no peer in that line. That's why the rascals had laid a plan to liberate him, in event of his arrest for the money-order swindles. We are up against that gang, Chick, as sure as death and taxes!"

"I agree with you," said Chick. "We ought to be able, however, to identify a counterfeiter capable of producing work as good as this."

"I know of none now at large in this country," said Nick. "There are two men over in England, however, named Hugh Hurley and Philip Smith——"

"Known as Smiler Smith."

"The same. Either of them could produce such plates. I don't know whether they are now at large. It may be that both are over here, and working together."

"More than likely, I think."

"Rat is right," Patsy slipped in sententiously. "A litter of rats, chief, I should say. We must get after them with a gun."

"Here's another point," Nick said quietly. "We know, of course, that President Benton did not meet Hart this morning, nor agree to make any loan."

"Certainly not. Can it be that Benton has absconded with the money?"

"No," Nick quickly declared. "He is utterly above such crime. Furthermore, he would not have taken any such roundabout way to steal half a million, which he could have removed from the vault whenever he pleased."

"In that case, then——"

"There is only one explanation," Nick interrupted. "The man who did the job was not President Benton."

"A double?"

"Exactly. A man made up so like him as to deceive Chester, and the clerks who saw him enter and go to his private office. He is a type of man easily counterfeited, with his full beard, bushy hair, and gold-bowed spectacles. This smacks of Floyd again, who is a remarkably clever impersonator."

"True. If that is so——"

"Wait. I'll question Chester."

Their conversation had been quietly held, while the cashier and bookkeeper nervously waited. Both brightened up with eagerness when Nick turned toward them, tossing the forged bonds upon the table.

"I'm not going to tell you what I think about this robbery, Chester, for time is of value in getting after the crooks," said Nick. "We must round them up, if possible, before they can divide the money and bolt for parts unknown. You realize, of course, Mr. Chester, that the man you saw here this morning was not President Benton."

"Not Benton?"

"Certainly not!" Nick forcibly declared. "Hart did not meet Benton this morning. That was a cock-and-bull story, and part of the scheme to blind you and get you to deliver the money. If the rascal who impersonated Benton had attempted to do it, his subterfuge might have been detected."

"Good heavens, I had not thought of that!"

"It's as plain as twice two," said Nick. "Benton has been held up somewhere this morning. One of the crooks impersonated him so cleverly that he got by. He did not speak to any one when he came in, and entered Benton's private office, did he?"

"No, he did not. He at once went into the room."

"And when he requested you to come to the door?" said Nick inquiringly, "did he rise, or turn toward you, when giving you his instructions?"

"No, he did not," Chester admitted. "I thought nothing of it then, however. He was seated at his desk with his back toward me, still holding that letter in his hand. He

merely glanced over his shoulder and gave me his instructions."

"Exactly," said Nick. "He made sure that neither you, nor any one else, should get a look at his face."

"But—good heavens!" Mr. Chester exclaimed. "The impostor was not alone here."

"Certainly not. The two messengers were his confederates."

"But there was still another—Benton's friend from England, the son of our London correspondent, Lord Amboy, the honorary head of the Plaisted & Patten banking house," cried Mr. Chester, with reviving excitement. "He could not have been the scoundrel's confederate. He should have detected the imposture—must have detected it. He came in with Benton, or the knave you say was his double—as he has been coming nearly every morning for the past ten days."

Nick listened with rapidly increasing suspicions. He did not interrupt, however, for the agitated cashier was sending along the facts with all the celerity one could ask. Not until Chester paused for want of breath did the detective resume his inquiries.

"Be calm, Chester, and make this plain to me," he directed. "Do you mean that a son of Lord Amboy has been visiting Benton?"

"That's just what I mean."

"Who is this son?"

"Archibald Dunn Amboy, the fourth son of Lord Amboy, of Devonshire. He is here to visit Benton, and to study our American financial and banking systems."

"Ah, I see! He evidently has made a colossal success of it," Nick dryly put in.

"What do you mean by that?" Chester cried impetuously. "Why, why, man, he has been here for ten days, a guest in President Benton's home. He has been coming down each morning with him, and spending part of the day here. He should have detected——"

"Rot!" Nick interrupted. "Rot and rubbish! He, too, was an impostor!"

"Good God!"

"He has been doing this, Chester, only that his entrance with the crook this morning should reduce the chances of detection," Nick forcibly pointed out. "Coming in with the supposed Benton, as usual, naturally would avert nearly every possibility of detection."

"I see—I see!" Mr. Chester said, with a groan. "Good heavens! I can hardly credit it. It appears, then, that we are the victims of a most carefully planned and perpetrated robbery."

"Nothing else," said Nick shortly. "Tell me—how did this fellow impose upon President Benton?"

"Why, there's nothing to it," cried the cashier. "He arrived here ten days ago, bringing letters of introduction from Lord Amboy and from Mr. Plaisted, the acting head of the London banking house."

"Forgeries, Chester, both of them."

"They must have been, I suppose; but such a suspicion did not enter our heads. We never had met the man, but we did not question his credentials for a moment. He appeared like a thoroughbred English gentleman."

"No doubt."

"He said he had come over here partly for pleasure, but chiefly to study our banking systems. Any ulterior design, much less a criminal one, was farthest from our thoughts. Benton insisted upon his becoming his guest, of course, for our relations with his father and the English bankers are very cordial."

"All that was perfectly natural," Nick allowed. "The man was a crook, nevertheless, and we must lose no time in getting after him. Describe him, please?"

"He is of medium build and good figure, about thirty years old, dark complexion, smoothly shaved, and a really fine-appearing fellow. He speaks with a slight English accent, and certainly would be classed as an attractive and very fascinating man."

Nick did not then recall any English crook of that description. He saw that he could learn no more from Mr. Chester, however, and he said a bit abruptly:

"That's all. You may leave the rest to us. Do nothing more about the matter, Chester, until you hear from me."

"Very well. But I hope——"

"We shall do all that can possibly be done," Nick interrupted, then turned to Chick and Patsy.

"Come with me," he said quietly. "We must go at this case like bulls at a five-bar gate. Nothing short of the miraculous will save that money."

CHAPTER VI.

NICK RECEIVES A LETTER.

No man could have realized more keenly than Nick Carter how great a task he had undertaken, as well as how quickly it must be accomplished, if his efforts were to meet with success. There was a look of grim determination on his strong, clean-cut face when he left the directors' room with Chick and Patsy.

Nick did not immediately go far, however—only into the corridor adjoining the bank. There he halted, facing his two assistants, to give them his instructions and disclose his own designs.

"I'm off to the Benton residence, in Riverside Drive," he began. "I don't expect to find Mr. Archibald Dunn Amboy. Far from it; but I may find evidence revealing his true identity, or that will give me a clew to his doings this morning."

"Benton must have left home with him this morning," Chick reasoned.

"Certainly. The rascal lured Benton to some place where the crooks were awaiting him, and the banker was held up."

"That's my view of it."

"I don't think the scoundrels have killed him," Nick added. "They would not needlessly take chances of the electric chair. They have kept him a prisoner until they could commit the robbery and get away with the money."

"Most likely."

"One of them was made up for the part this morning, and ready to begin the impersonation as soon as Benton was secured. That enabled him to arrive at the bank at the usual time."

"Do you think that Amboy, so called, is an Englishman?"

"I do," said Nick confidently. "I now am quite sure, too, that Hugh Hurley and Smiler Smith are his confederates. We are up against a gang of English crooks, with whom Ambrose Floyd had, before his recent arrest, laid plans to commit this robbery."

"That looks like a sure thing," said Chick.

"They have turned the trick, but we must contrive to get them. I want you to return to our office, Patsy, where I can immediately reach you by telephone. I may have use for you after visiting the Benton residence."

"I'll be right on the wire, chief," said Patsy promptly.

"How can I assist?" Chick inquired.

"Cable over to Scotland Yard, Chick, to begin with," Nick directed. "Find out whether the whereabouts of Hurley and Smith is known, also what other crooks of their class are known to be out of England. I know of one, at least, with whom Hurley used to be very friendly. His name is Jimmie Boxer."

"We've got his mug in our gallery," put in Chick. "I remember his face perfectly. He has a crescent scar under his left eye."

"That's the man," said the detective. "It will be a great advantage to positively determine the identity of these rascals. That really is half the battle."

"Nearly that, surely."

"If you learn that Boxer is out of England, take a look into the café of some of the leading hotels. He is a fastidious dog, who would not patronize an ordinary barroom, but his thirst for beer is insatiable. You may possibly run across him."

"And if I should be so fortunate?"

"Shadow him to cover," Nick directed. "We want this whole gang, as well as the boodle. I'll be off now, and will show up at home in time for lunch."

"Unless we hear from you, chief."

"Exactly, Patsy," said Nick. "That's all for the present."

It did not prove to be all, however. As all three were about to hasten out to the waiting touring car, Mr. Chester came rushing out of the bank, bringing a sealed letter addressed to Nick, in care of the bank.

"I feared you had gone," he cried excitedly, as he approached. "This must have some bearing on the crime, Nick, or the writer would not have addressed you in care of the bank. It was brought in by this boy, who says a man in Wall Street paid him half a dollar to deliver it."

Nick glanced at the lad, who had followed the cashier from the bank, and then at the latter. It was in a perfectly plain envelope, addressed with a pen, and Nick quickly broke the seal and opened the inclosed sheet.

It contained the following audacious communication, also written with a pen:

"My Dear Carter: I see that you have been called upon to investigate the South National Bank robbery and get after the thieves. Knowing that you will, as soon as you examine those bogus bonds, suspect the undersigned of having forged them, I realize that any attempt to hide the truth from you would be quite vain.

"I send you these few lines, therefore, to confirm your suspicion and put you on an equal footing with me. You now will have no doubt. You will know just whom you want for the robbery. You will at once start out to get me. I already am out to get you—and I'm going to do it!

"Thus, as I have stated, we are on an equal footing. Each knows what the other wants and intends to do. This is as it should be. I want no advantage over you. I can get you without it. I have two old scores against you, Carter, very big and irritating scores, and it's high time they were wiped off the slate. That can be done only by —wiping you off the earth. I shall do it.

"Do not infer, however, that I have any hatred for you personally. I appreciate that you, in opposing me, obey only the call of duty. Others are antagonized in a like way. Soldiers fight and kill, but not with individual hatreds. We are not unlike them. I must get you, Carter, or you will get me. I know that from bitter experience. I advise you thus frankly, however, that my conscience may be clear after I have put you away and have begun to burn holes in the sky with the half million now in my possession.

"Pardon this encroachment upon your time. Surely you must feel that time now is valuable. I merely want you to know just where and how we stand. I think I have made our relations perfectly plain. The law makes you my enemy; and that, being reactionary, makes me, most decidedly yours, Ambrose Floyd."

Stepping aside with Chick and Patsy when he saw the signature, Nick read this audacious letter aloud to them, yet too low for other ears.

"Great Scott!" said Chick, when Nick folded the letter and thrust it into his pocket. "That's the worst ever. What do you say to it, Nick?"

"He is right on one point only," replied Nick grimly. "It confirms my suspicion."

"Gee, he certainly has a crust!" said Patsy.

"He has overleaped his mount," Nick continued. "I now am sure that he is the man who impersonated Benton. I have thought from the first that he was the one. The fact that it might have been necessary for Benton to sign something during the imposition, together with Floyd's ability to have imitated Benton's writing, make him the member of the gang most likely to have been selected for the subterfuge."

"Sure thing!" Chick agreed. "It now looks like a cinch."

"He left the bank less than an hour ago," added Nick. "He since has found cover, removed his disguise, written this letter, put a spy upon the bank, very possibly himself —all of which convinces me, in view of the limited time he has had, that he and his gang are quartered in this part of the city."

"By Jove, that certainly is a reasonable conclusion, Nick, as well as a valuable one."

"It reduces the circle," Nick replied. "Wait one moment and I'll question this boy."

The lad could add but little to what he already had said. He stated that the letter had been given to him by a stranger, a man with a full beard, who had paid him half a dollar to deliver it. The boy could not say where the man came from, nor which way he went, and Nick saw plainly that the youngster was telling the truth. He discontinued his inquiries quite abruptly, therefore, and turned to Chick and Patsy.

"We'll be off," said he. "The letter has no great significance, Mr. Chester, but I'm obliged to you for overtaking me. You shall hear from me later."

"Speedily, Carter, I hope," replied the cashier, returning to the bank.

"Not a glance, now, as if we suspected that the bank is being watched," Nick said quietly, as they left the building. "I'm going to use the car to go to Riverside Drive. I'll take both of you as far as the subway station. Follow the instructions I have given you. We'll make no change because of this letter. I'll head as quickly as possible for the Benton residence."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONNECTING LINK.

The episodes of that morning were treading close on the heels of one another. It was only eleven o'clock when Nick Carter left the South National Bank, and not quite half past eleven when he arrived in the neighborhood of President Benton's handsome dwelling in Riverside Drive.

He left Danny to wait with the car more than a block away, however, while he walked around to a side street on which part of the Benton estate abutted, his intention being to have a look at the house before entering.

Nick did not expect to find the Englishman. He knew that the rascal would not dare to return after having committed the robbery. He hoped, nevertheless, to pick up some clew worth following, and to learn how and at what time Benton had left home with his treacherous guest.

Nick also knew that the family consisted only of Benton and one daughter, Mary Benton, the banker's wife having died several years before, and he expected that he must interview the daughter to obtain the information he wanted.

As he approached a side gate of the estate, however, Nick noted one fact, which, together with discoveries that immediately followed, gave rise to new suspicions and caused a material change in the attitude he had intended to take. He merely observed, to begin with, that the front and one side of the house were flanked with a neatly trimmed lawn.

Naturally, of course, this at once brought up in his mind the grass-stained boots of the murdered Mrs. Fanfarlie, also the deductions mentioned to Chick and Patsy.

"By Jove, this may have been the very house and lawn," Nick said to himself. "Mrs. Fanfarlie is known to have told several bankers that she had bonds to sell. There seems to be a connecting link between all of these parties. The crook who was here may be the very man wanted for the murder—the mysterious Mr. Fanfarlie. Unless I am much mistaken, I shall have to tackle Miss Benton along other lines than I intended."

Proceeding up a gravel walk leading to a side door, Nick attempted to confirm his suspicions before ringing—not only attempted, but also succeeded.

Under a window beyond the side steps, evidently the window of a library, he discovered imprints in the trodden grass and in a narrow flower bed near the foundation wall, the size and shape of which at once convinced him that Mrs. Maud Fanfarlie had been spying and listening there the previous Sunday evening.

"These do settle it," he murmured. "She was here, all right, but what the dickens did she see or hear that led up to the murder? What relations existed between her and this Englishman? By Jove! it now is a safe gamble that the woman came from England, and that she was one of this gang of British bunko gamesters. That's why it has been impossible to establish her identity. I wish I might get a good look at the man. If he is a crook of any prominence, I'll wager I know him by sight, at least. I'll see what Miss Benton can tell me about——"

"What are you doing there, sir? Are you trying to look into our library?"

Nick's cogitations, while he still was surveying the footprints, were interrupted by a woman who had quietly appeared on the side steps—Miss Benton herself.

She was tall and rather plain, but with an attractive figure. She was a woman then in the thirties—so far beyond the average marrying age as to explain, perhaps, together with her plainness, the weakness of which she had been guilty.

Nick turned quickly, not at all embarrassed, though he artfully answered:

"No, indeed, I assure you. I have no wish to peer into your library. I thought I saw something moving near the wall of the house, a rat, or——"

"Dear me!"

"I must have been mistaken," Nick added, approaching the steps. "You are Miss Benton, I believe, and my name is Carter. I am well acquainted with your father, and I would like a little information from you, if you can spare me a few minutes. Mr. Benton is not at home, of course?"

"No, sir," said Miss Benton, shaking her head. "He is always at the bank at this hour. I do not recall his having mentioned you to me, Mr. Carter, but I shall be glad to give you any information I can," she added agreeably. "Will you walk in, sir?"

"Thank you."

"Take a chair in the library. Pardon me for having misconstrued your movements outside."

"Certainly. Don't mention it," smiled Nick. "I must have appeared like an inquisitive trespasser."

"Well, I could not imagine what you were doing there."

"No wonder! I suppose Mr. Amboy also is absent?"

"Yes. Are you acquainted with him, too?"

Mary Benton's face lighted in a way that instantly gave Nick a cue to the misfortune that had befallen her, and the knavery of which the treacherous cur who had been her father's guest was guilty.

"Well, no, not exactly," he replied, appreciating the increasing delicacy of the situation, and feeling a genuine pity for the woman. "I never have had the pleasure of meeting him. It is about him, however, that I wish to speak."

"About Mr. Amboy?"

"Yes. He is a very agreeable man, I am told?"

"Very!" cried Miss Benton, with some enthusiasm. "I think I never met a more fascinating man. Father is of the same opinion, and he thinks the world of him."

"Are you quite sure of that, Miss Benton?"

"Yes, indeed. He has repeatedly said so."

Nick felt that he could waste no time, that the worst must be told sooner or later, and he did not demur over breaking the truth to her as gently as possible.

"I feel very sorry to inform you, Miss Benton, that your father has had occasion to change his mind," he said, more gravely.

The woman turned as white as her lace collar.

"Change his mind?" she echoed, staring at Nick.

"Yes."

"For what reason?"

"Because Mr. Amboy is not all that he has pretended to be," Nick informed her.

"Sir!" she cried. "How dare you, Mr. Carter, come here with such an assertion! Who are you, that you presume to——"

Nick checked her with a gesture, and motioned her to resume her seat.

"Pardon me, Miss Benton, but the circumstances do not permit me to beat about the bush," he said earnestly. "I am sorry if what I must say will wound you. My

name is Nick Carter. I am a detective. Your father's bank was robbed this morning of half a million of dollars. Mr. Amboy, so called, is an impostor, and one of the gang of crooks that committed the robbery."

Nick was not surprised at what followed.

Mary Benton sank back on her chair as if her last ounce of strength had left her. She was as pale as if the hand of death had touched her. She stared at Nick for a moment, her ghastly face reflecting an utterly indescribable agony, and then she suddenly seemed to grasp the full significance of all he had said. She turned and bowed her head upon her arms, bursting into tears.

Nick had guessed the truth, but he did not speak it. He arose quietly and closed the library door, then waited until the woman's first paroxysms of grief had abated.

"I want you to be perfectly frank with me, Miss Benton, for much may depend upon it," he said gravely. "You must know that only a very serious situation could cause me to hurt you in this way."

"I know—I know!" she moaned brokenly.

"I have not told you the worst," Nick added. "Your father, who was impersonated at the bank this morning by one of the crooks, is now in the hands of the gang. His life may be in danger and——"

"My father—his life!"

"Unless——"

"Wait!"

The woman turned and drew herself up. With a display of will power that somewhat surprised the detective, she assumed a calmness that was given the lie by the terrible look on her drawn, white face. It showed to Nick, nevertheless, that under the superficial side of her nature, she possessed character and pride that enabled her to meet the distressing situation in which she found herself.

"Tell me all of the circumstances," she said hoarsely.

Nick immediately proceeded to do so, covering the ground as quickly as possible.

Miss Benton listened, without interrupting, and before he had finished, her eyes were tearless and her lips hard pressed.

"This is terrible, indeed, Mr. Carter," she said. "More terrible, even, than you can imagine. What am I to do?"

"Will you do what I advise, Miss Benton?" asked Nick. "I think you will never regret it. I am far better able to wisely handle such a situation and such a man, than most persons. You may confide in me with absolute confidence. Will you do so?"

"For my father's sake—yes," she replied. "What am I to do?"

"Tell me the whole truth."

"I will do so."

"Are you married to this impostor?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Last Saturday."

"Secretly?"

"Yes."

"Who else knows of it?"

"Only you and the justice who performed the ceremony," said Miss Benton. "Don't ask me, Mr. Carter, why I did this. I was fascinated with the man. I believed every word he told me, his avowals and all that he professed. He told me that the marriage must be kept secret until he could privately inform his father, Lord Amboy, and I believed him. Heavens! is it possible that love can be so quickly turned to detestation? I——"

"I appreciate your feelings, Miss Benton, but don't pain yourself with these details," Nick kindly interrupted. "This man is a criminal. The marriage can be quickly annulled, and perhaps never disclosed."

"Thank God for that!" said the woman fervently.

"Leave it entirely to me for the present," Nick advised her. "Now, tell me—were you in this room last Sunday evening?"

"I was."

"At ten o'clock, when it was raining?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"No. Mr. Amboy was here. We were talking of our marriage and discussing future plans."

"That's all," said Nick shortly.

"All of what?" questioned the woman.

Nick did not inform her. He knew he had found a needed link in the chain, and he could not tell her that she was wed to a man with blood on his hands. Instead, he asked quietly, as if he had not heard her question:

"At what time did your father leave home this morning?"

"Soon after eight."

"With Mr. Amboy?"

"Yes."

"How did they go downtown?"

"In a taxicab."

"A public one?"

"Yes. I am sure of that, because my father phoned for it."

"Do you know where?"

"I do not. I know only that he did so."

"I can learn, I think, and may be able to trace it," said Nick. "Now, Miss Benton, one word more, and I then must hurry away. I want a precise description of Amboy, so precise that——"

"I can give you something better," she interrupted.

"Something better?"

"I once asked him to have a photograph taken, but he refused," she explained. "I wondered at it, but I now understand. One day, however, I took a snapshot of him with my camera, when he was not looking. I have the finished photograph. It is at your service," she bitterly added.

"Will you kindly get it?"

"Yes."

Miss Benton arose and left the room, returning in a few moments and placing in the detective's hand a small photograph of the much-wanted man.

Nick stepped to the window to examine it. A glance was enough.

"Great Scott!" he mentally exclaimed. "Frank Foster, the English sneak thief and confidence man. Known as Fascinating Frank, Foxy Foster, and a score of other nicknames. By Jove! I now know the woman, also. An old flame and confederate of his—Fannie Moran, known around London as Fly Fannie. Fanfarlie might have suggested her identity."

Mary Benton drew nearer, asking:

"Do you recognize the man, Mr. Carter?"

Nick turned and slipped the photograph into his pocket.

"Not positively," he replied evasively. "I now think, however, that you need not fear for your father's safety,

nor that your unfortunate marriage will ever become generally known."

"Oh, Mr. Carter——"

"Hush!" Nick gently interrupted her. "Wait until I have cleared away the clouds before you thank me. You have a telephone here?

"Yes."

"I wish to use it."

"This way. It is in the alcove."

Nick hastened to ring up his business office and talk with Patsy Garvan.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN HIMSELF.

The interview with President Benton's daughter had taken some little time. It was after one o'clock when Nick left the house, departing by the same way he had entered, and returning to the side street.

As he paused to close the gate, turning slightly, Nick caught sight of a man standing on a corner about thirty yards away, but out of view from the Benton residence. His figure struck Nick as being a familiar one, but he could not then see his face.

The man appeared to be meditating, or seriously pondering over something, as one might who could not decide what was best to be done. He did not even glance toward the banker's residence, but if Nick could have detected the fact, he would have discovered that the man held in one hand a small mirror, which enabled him, though his back was turned in that direction, to see a very distinct reflection of the Benton dwelling—and the detective then at the side gate.

Suddenly shaking his head, as if he had finally come to a fixed determination, he turned abruptly and crossed the street, disappearing beyond the corner.

Nick Carter had, however, obtained a distinct view of the man's face.

"By Jove, I'm right!" he muttered. "It's the man himself—Foxy Frank Foster, the rascal who has so outrageously wronged this woman and brutally killed another. Was he thinking of coming to see his wife? Is there something in the house which he neglected to remove or destroy, and was he impelled to take a chance in order to do so, the very chance I have thought he would not take? What matters? If I knew it was there, I would not return to find it. The man himself is good enough for me. Through him, by Jove, I can corner the entire gang!"

Nick already had taken up the trail. He hastened to the corner mentioned, and, by peering around, he could see Foster walking briskly down the street. He was not the only pedestrian. There were many others, and Nick saw that he could easily shadow the man without danger of detection. He lingered to put on a simple disguise, however, and then began the pursuit.

Foxy Foster apparently had not the slightest suspicion, not a shadow of fear. He walked to the nearest subway station, where he took a south-bound train and rode to Wall Street.

Five minutes later he turned into Pine Street, not once having looked back, not once betraying any interest in the doings of others.

Nick shadowed him to an old brick building near the East River, in Pine Street. Entering a few moments after him, Nick heard him ascending the stairway on the second floor, and he stealthily mounted the flight below, and then the second, thus keeping track of the rascal until he discovered his destination.

It proved to be a back room on the top floor, or, more precisely, two adjoining back rooms, the only two in the rear of the narrow building. Two in front were closed, and it afterward appeared that they were used for storage rooms by occupants of the ground floor.

Between the doors of the front and rear rooms ran a narrow, dimly lighted passageway, the only light coming from a small window in the roof. It was a dismal and out-of-the-way place for any persons to have attempted to do a legitimate business.

Nevertheless, upon stealing into the passageway mentioned, after having heard Foster close a door, Nick discovered a pasteboard sign on the only door the man could have entered, for the use of the front rooms was obvious, and across the door of the other back room several boards had been securely nailed, preventing an entrance.

The sign on the door read:

"Mason & Marvin—Printers and Engravers of Visiting Cards."

Nick Carter smiled grimly when he read it.

"A blind," he said to himself. "Here's where the rascals have done their engraving, made their plates, and printed those bogus bonds. It's dollars to doughnuts that they have a secret plant in that other back room, with a connection between the two."

Nick did not linger long to speculate upon what was within. Instead, stealing to the door, he crouched and peered through the keyhole, all the while listening intently for the sound of any step on the stairs, but with one ear taking in the talk in the room, and with one eye fixed upon its occupants. He could see them plainly—three men seated around a bare deal-board table on which a lot of visiting-card samples were lying.

One was the man who had just entered.

Another was a stocky, dark man of forty, whom Nick instantly recognized as Hugh Hurley, the English counterfeiter.

The face of the third wore an almost constant smile, or grin, which had given him his nickname—Smiler Smith, another clever crook of the same class and nationality.

Nick could see them plainly, and hear distinctly what they said.

"Wot matters?" Hurley was saying, with a broad vernacular. "Wot matters if 'e do stay there all night? 'E'll not croak in a night. Mebbe the bobbies will trace 'im. We figured they would. If they don't, we can phone the blooming daughter to-morrow. Wot matters, since we've got the blunt?"

"No matter at all, Hugh," Foster said bluntly. "These Carters will trace him soon enough, let them alone for that."

"The sooner the better, Foxy, as far as that goes."

"Certainly, though he'll be none the worse for his stay there."

"They are speaking of Benton," thought Nick. "They have left it perfectly easy to trace him. Patsy soon will find him, if he has not already done so."

"I don't blame Foxy for not wanting to phone the daughter till he's dead sure there'll be no leak out about the other," Smith vouchsafed, with a grin. "That sure is the rummiest go I've known of late—to marry her and

then slit the windpipe of the other. Did you fear she'd squeal, Foxy?"

"She already had squealed, Smiler, and you know it," said Foster, frowning. "What else could I do but put out her light?"

"That's right," said Hurley. "Wot helse could 'e do?"

"There would have been no coin for us, Smiler, if I had not done it," added Foster. "Nor if I had not intercepted the letter she wrote to Benton last Sunday night. Luckily, glancing at the letters on his desk next morning, I recognized her writing on the envelope. I sneaked it out before he began to open his mail."

"Why not?" growled Hurley. "Sure you'd sneak it."

"And what could I do when I found that she had blowed the whole scheme to Benton?" Foster went on, scowling. "I went to see why she did it? I knew, all right, when I found that the jealous jade had learned I was married to the banker's daughter. Hang me, if I see how she got wise! But one word led to another. She swore she'd squeal, and—well, I made sure she couldn't. What else could I do?"

"Nothing," said Hurley. "You did wot I'd 'ave done."

"Well, you ended Fly Fannie, all right," said Smith.

"She was altogether too fly!" snapped Foster. "I got away with the bonds she was planning to sell, and they were the only link between her and us. If the Carters don't get wise—well, that's all I care. The police will never strike the trail."

"It's a rum go, Foxy, all the same," Smith insisted. "What possessed you to marry the woman?"

"I'm speculating in futures," said Foster, half laughing. "Her dad is worth a couple of millions. I reckoned I could win him over later, with me hitched to his only daughter, and she was so soft I couldn't resist the temptation. Mebbe 'twill work round all right. I'd bank on it, mates, if we could down the one man who's like to get wise. Old moneybags can be won over, with the girl to help me. I'm not known over here, and I'll promise to reform—that ought to be good enough."

Hurley laughed noisily.

Nick had heard enough to fill in every link in the chain. He was thinking of Floyd, wondering where he was, and whether he had not better steal out and arrange to arrest the whole gang the moment Floyd should put in an appearance.

Hurley's laugh still could be heard, when Nick's thoughts were cut short by the threatening, incisive voice of the man himself:

"When you have heard all you wish from outside, Carter, we'll go in and you can listen to me."

Nick started up and swung round, reaching for his revolver.

He found himself looking into the deadly muzzle of another—a gun in the hand of Ambrose Floyd. The forger was standing in the doorway of one of the storage rooms, where he had been concealed all the time, and on the instant Nick suspected the ambush.

"This is why Foster was out there!" flashed through his mind.

"Don't reach for a gun," said Floyd, with icy assurance. "You'll be a dead man before you can pull it."

"I'll take your word for it," said Nick, hooking his thumbs through the armholes of his vest, and coolly surveying the rascal. "Are we to remain standing here?"

"No. Come, go in there; are you sleeping?"

The last, more loudly uttered, brought out the three men in the room. Not one appeared at all surprised, which further convinced Nick that the ambush was cut and dried.

They surrounded him without a word, moreover, Foster quickly securing the detective's weapons, while Hurley and Smith drew Nick's hands back of him and snapped his own handcuffs on his wrists.

Floyd had held his revolver within a foot of the detective's face all the while, with a look in his eyes that no sane man would have ignored.

"In with him, now," he commanded. "We'll soon see, very soon, who is to win in this running."

They seized him as vultures seize a rabbit, forcing him into the room and locking the door.

CHAPTER IX.

CONVERGING LINES.

Patsy Garvan was as good as his word—he was right on the wire when Nick telephoned from the Benton residence.

Nick did not tell him all that he had discovered. He told him, in fact, only at what time Benton and Amboy had left home, and that they had left in a public taxicab summoned by telephone. He then directed Patsy to find the chauffeur and trace the movements of the couple.

A novice might have found it a difficult task—but not Patsy Garvan.

Calling in the telephone exchange nearest to the Benton residence, he quickly learned that a connection had been made at the hour mentioned with a garage also in that part of the city.

Calling up the garage, Patsy then learned that a taxicab had been sent to the Benton residence, driven by a man named Brady, who then was out with the same car.

"Give me your number and I'll notify you when he comes in," said the garage man.

"Never mind my number," replied Patsy. "If Brady comes in, you hold him until I show up. I'll be at your garage in fifteen minutes."

Patsy did better. He entered the garage in less than fourteen minutes—and he found Brady sitting on a box in the doorway with a taxicab at the curb.

"What's up, that Carter is after me?" he inquired, after Patsy had made himself known.

"I guess he isn't after you very strong," replied Patsy. "He's after a man who was with Cyrus Benton this morning. Where did you take them?"

"To a house in East Fifty-second Street," said Brady hurriedly.

"What's the number?"

"I don't know. But I know the house."

"Get aboard your buzz wagon, then," said Patsy. "The sooner you land me at that house, Brady, the better I'll like it—and you."

"You'll be mighty fond of me, then, when we get there," grinned Brady, hastening to obey. "I'll give you the ride of your life."

"You'll go some, then," Patsy said dryly, as both took the outside seat of the taxicab.

Brady did not reply. He came very near making good, however, for he ate up the distance to Fifty-second Street in record time for a taxicab

Patsy directed him to stop several doors from the house and wait instructions. He gave him a hint at what might be required of him, and Brady's readiness convinced Patsy that he could be safely relied upon.

The dwelling proved to be one of an attractive sandstone block, but its closed vestibule door and lowered curtains hid any sign of life within.

"Gee! I hope they haven't croaked him," thought Patsy, gazing furtively at the windows, while he approached. "No plate on the door, eh? There must be some reason why the rascals employed a public taxicab for such a job. They must have known it could be traced. I'll be hanged if I quite see——"

Patsy's train of thought was interrupted by the appearance of a servant girl on the steps of the adjoining house. She was coming down with a broom to sweep the sidewalk. This was fortunate for Patsy, who paused near her and said:

"Will you kindly tell me, Nora, who lives in this next house?"

The girl stopped sweeping and gazed at him curiously.

"Faith, me name's not Nora, but I'll tell you," she replied, with a quizzical twinkle in her gray eyes. "If you spring another question, call me Maggie. That's me name."

"All right, Maggie, and a nice name it is—much like the bearer," said Patsy.

"Whist!" laughed the girl, blushing and bending nearer. "I think you were after kissing the stone."

"I never needed to," returned Patsy, smiling. "Tell me, Maggie, who lives there."

"No one lives there. The house is to let."

"Furnished?"

"That's what," answered the girl. "I saw some men going in there this morning, but they came out again. They have rented it, mebbe, for I saw one of them gazing at the house last Friday. The people who own it are in Europe. That's where Ireland is—God save her!"

Patsy now suspected the truth. He thanked the girl and slipped her a silver dollar, which he had to force upon her. He then beckoned to Brady.

"There will be no scrapping, Brady," said he when the cabby approached.

"No? Sure, that's too bad," said Brady. "I was looking for it."

"The house is unoccupied."

"How can you get in?"

"Come and see."

Both mounted the steps, where Patsy produced a picklock and deftly opened the door.

"Faith, you ought to be a crook," said Brady, with a grin.

Patsy did not reply. As he stepped into the house, he heard smothered groans from the floor above. Not knowing positively whom he might encounter, he slipped a revolver into his side pocket, then hastened up the stairs, closely followed by the cabman.

The sounds came from a back room on the second floor. One glance into it as he approached the open door told Patsy the story. None of the crooks were in the house.

Bound hand and foot, and secured to a bed, with a gag tied in his mouth, lay Mr. Cyrus Benton, quite weak from his continued efforts to liberate himself but otherwise none the worse for his rough handling.

Patsy quickly released him, at the same time making himself known and beginning to tell him what had occurred. The banker's relief, mingled with amazement and consternation when informed of the robbery, may be easily imagined.

He then told Patsy how he had been trapped by Amboy. It appeared that the latter had lured him into calling at the house, by stating that he had met an English lady who dwelt there, and who wanted information about the sale of some stocks and bonds in her possession. Being an invalid, however, Amboy had stated she had asked him to call with Benton that morning, while on their way to the bank.

Benton, with absolute confidence in his companion, had readily consented, only to be immediately held up and secured by three men, who soon afterward left the house, and the banker in the condition Patsy had found him.

"It's plainly evident, Mr. Benton, that they wanted only to detain you until after the robbery," said Patsy, after hearing the story. "Later, no doubt, they would have notified some one where to find you."

"Perhaps," said President Benton doubtfully. "Be that as it may, I now must go down to the bank, and——"

"On the contrary, sir, you must do nothing of the kind," Patsy said decidedly. "You must go home and remain there until you hear from Nick."

He then explained that Benton's appearance at the bank might pervert some of Nick's designs, and perhaps prevent the discovery of the crooks and the recovery of their plunder.

President Benton yielded finally, but not until Patsy promised to go down to the bank and inform Cashier Chester of his safety, which the detective somewhat reluctantly consented to do.

Patsy already had learned that the two crooks had been taken to the bank by Brady after leaving the house, and he now directed the cabman to take Benton home, while he hastened to comply with the latter's request.

It was nearly two o'clock when Patsy again arrived in the banking district, where he made an unexpected discovery. Walking through Nassau Street, he caught sight of a man stealing into a doorway and evidently intent upon watching an opposite saloon.

"Gee! If that isn't Chick, in disguise, I'll eat my bonnet," he muttered. "Who is he watching? He must have got wise to something. I'll soon find out."

Slipping on a simple disguise with which he was provided, lest he might be seen and known by Chick's quarry, he presently joined the latter in the doorway.

"Hello!" was Chick's greeting, when he recognized Patsy. "How happens it that you turn up?"

Patsy quickly informed him what he had accomplished, and what he had learned from Nick.

"By Jove, we seem to be closing in on the rascals," said Chick, after listening.

"But why are you here?" questioned Patsy. "Are you watching some one?"

"You bet!" exclaimed Chick. "I got a reply to my cablegram about half past twelve. Captain Kane, of Scotland Yard, communicated with me."

"Stating what?"

"Both Hurley and Smiler Smith have been missing from London for three months. It's known that they are in this country, also that three other clever crooks came over

two months ago. They are Frank Foster, a crack confidence man and a notorious running mate of his, Fannie Moran, known as Fly Fannie. The other is Jimmie Boxer, an all-round rascal."

"Gee! Things are looking up," said Patsy. "This helps, for fair."

"Helps is no name for it," Chick replied.

"What do you mean?"

"Nick suspected, you remember, that the gang is quartered in this part of the city. I came down here, therefore, and dropped into the Wilton Café. Whom do you suppose I discovered there?"

"Cut out the guessing," said Patsy. "Whom?"

"Jimmie Boxer himself."

"The devil you say!"

"I have been on his track ever since," said Chick. "He now is in that saloon, sipping beer. You'd better stay with me. There may be something doing providing the rascal ever gets a move on. As Nick said, he's got an insatiable thirst for beer. There is no sign yet of his moving."

Nor was there any sign for more than an hour—sixty lagging seconds that steadily increased the impatience of the watching detectives.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOCAL POINT.

"I warned you! I wrote you, Carter, that I would get you!"

Ambrose Floyd was the speaker.

Nick Carter sat bound to one of the plain wooden chairs in the room into which the counterfeiters had forced him. He appeared entirely unconcerned, despite that he then was powerless, and the situation most threatening. He was glancing around the room, at the few evidences of a legitimate business, at the single lofty window, at a bench near one of the walls, at the open door of an adjoining room—quite as if the four men into whose hands he had fallen were of least importance.

"I wrote you I would get you!" repeated Floyd, sitting on an opposite chair and vengefully eying his captive.

"Yes, I remember," said Nick indifferently. "You appear to have done so."

"Appearances in this case are not deceitful—I have done so."

"Well, I'm not denying it. I see nothing to argue about."

"You don't?"

"No, nor to discuss."

"You seem to think——"

"I more than think about this business—I know all about it, Floyd," Nick curtly interrupted. "I know just how you got out of prison and who got you out. I know all about the game you have played, and who these rascals are that now stand scowling at——"

"Oh, wot matters?" snarled Hurley, interrupting. "We know you know it all. We know you're the wise gink over 'ere. That is why we planned a scheme to get you, the which——"

"I also know all about that," Nick curtly cut in.

"You do, eh?"

"Perfectly well. Foxy Foster knew I would visit the Benton residence, knew I would see and suspect and follow him, and he had only to lure me under the muzzle of Floyd's gun. All that is perfectly plain. Take a tip from me. Having got me—be sure you make the most of it."

"We shall," said Floyd, with vicious asperity.

"It's up to you."

"I have two old scores, Carter, to settle with you. You twice have put me behind the bars, and now I'm going to send you to a worse place. Don't think we have let you listen to all you overheard, without havnig planned for your finish."

"That's wot," growled Hurley.

"All we have been waiting for before bolting from this place was to get you," Floyd fiercely went on. "In half an hour the place will be on fire and we shall have left it—but not you!"

"No, not you," sneered Foster, glaring at the detective. "You're to stay and feed the flames. It's you, Carter, or me—you know that, also."

"I know that it will be you, Foster, sooner or later," Nick sternly retorted.

"Not at your hands—never!"

All this was taking place within five minutes after Nick's seizure, and it was plain enough to him that the desperate rascals did not intend to greatly prolong the scene. This was the more apparent in that Floyd abruptly dropped the foregoing strain of talk, saying sharply to Smiler Smith:

"Search his pockets, Smithy. We may find something that will tell us just how much he really knows."

"I know it all," said Nick coolly.

"I'm not taking your word, Carter," sneered the forger.

"Well, here's another rum one," cried Smith, who had pulled out the contents of Nick's vest pocket. "Have a look, Foxy. It's your own mug in black and white."

"Mine?"

"See for yourself."

Foster seized the photograph and vented a terrible oath.

"By Heaven, the cursed cop got it from her," he cried fiercely. "He has told her the whole business."

"That's just what I have done, Foster, as I shall tell it in the criminal court when the time comes," Nick sternly declared.

The discovery of the photograph served to bring on a fit of desperate impatience in Foster. He tore the picture to atoms, crying angrily:

"When the time comes, eh? It's time, by thunder, for me to get away from here and bolt for parts unknown. Out with my share of the blunt, Floyd—not a word! I'll not take no for an answer! I'm going to jump this city as soon as God will let me. Out with my share of the coin—I'll stand for no words over it."

"But we must wait for Boxer," cried Floyd, rising to expostulate.

"I'll wait for nothing!"

"He must have his," Floyd insisted. "As soon as he comes——"

"He's here now," cried Smith, as a triple rap sounded on the door. "I'll let him in."

He hastened to do so, while Foster, not to be stayed, rushed into the other room and returned with a large leather bag, weighing all that he could easily carry, and a smaller satchel in which he evidently designed to conceal his part of the plunder.

In the meantime, a stocky, red-faced man had entered. He stared with surprise at the scene, though chiefly at Nick, at the same time crying:

"What's this? What's up?"

Ambrose Floyd evidently saw that there was no delaying matters, that an immediate division of the fruits of the robbery was all that would satisfy Foster, and he yielded to the situation. He answered Boxer a bit sharply:

"Pull off your coat and get ready to count the stuff. We'll all bolt, since one is bound to. Spread some of those loose papers, Smithy, and saturate them with oil. We'll leave a fire here that will destroy the last sign of our doings—and the last sign of him! Slip a gag into Carter's mouth, Hurley, so that he can't yell for——"

But Ambrose Floyd got no farther with his fast and furious utterances.

As has been inferred, no doubt, Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan were not far behind Boxer when he entered the room. They had heard all that was said since his arrival, heard it with revolvers ready in their hands, but not until Nick's name was mentioned did they suppose that he was in the room.

Chick merely glanced at Patsy.

Both drew back a step and threw themselves with full force against the door.

The lock yielded as if it were made of cheese.

The door flew open with a crash against the inner wall.

In another instant Chick and Patsy were in the room, shouting at the tops of their lungs for the crooks to surrender.

There were two whom their weapons did not awe. Foster, with a vision of the electric chair in his mind, uttered a yell and snatched out his revolver. Before the murderer could level it, Chick fired.

Foster bounded into the air, with one convulsive cry, then pitched over the table and fell upon the floor—as dead as his victim still lying on a cold marble slab in the city morgue.

"That marriage is annulled!" flashed through Nick's mind.

In the meantime, though time scarce figured in the stirring scene, Hurley darted toward the other room, bent upon escaping from a window and gaining the roof.

Patsy Garvan dropped him with a bullet in his hip.

That ended it, in so far as opposition went, for both Floyd and Smiler Smith, no longer smiling, threw up their hands. Within twenty seconds both were in irons, and twenty more saw Nick liberated and shaking hands with his two assistants.

Half an hour later an ambulance, a patrol wagon, and a taxicab left the building in Pine Street.

The ambulance held a wounded man—Hugh Hurley.

The wagon contained Ambrose Floyd and Smiler Smith, on their way to legal punishment—and the body of Foster.

The taxicab contained Nick, Chick, and Patsy, with half a million in cash, on their way to the South National Bank.

Six policemen then were lugging down to the street floor the plates, engraving tools, and other paraphernalia belonging to the counterfeiters.

There was great rejoicing at the bank, and in the Benton residence that evening. Mary Benton, even, and no tongue thereafter called her by any other name, was rejoicing—and deep in her heart praying for the man who had saved her name.

There was one name on the lips of all men that evening, in fact, the name of the man who had deduced the truth and done the great work—Nick Carter.

THE END.

The detective thought that it would now be many years before he and his assistants would have to take the trail of Ambrose Floyd, but in this he was mistaken. Read the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 81, out March 28th, entitled "The Severed Hand; or, Nick Carter and the Shadow of Death." This will tell you how this clever crook gave Nick, Chick, and Patsy a hard chase and a dangerous trail to follow.

The Chief Inspector's Best Man.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER VIII.

POLICE CAPTAIN MASON.

That the interview was ended, that this girl had done and dared so much, and sacrificed even girlish reserve and decorum in the blindness of a love that was cherished even as life—that she was now about to depart, there could be no doubt.

And Detective Sheridan Keene instantly realized that his position was decidedly too hazardous to maintain.

Moving quickly and quietly he slipped around a corner of the house and ran full into the arms of a man who had been watching and listening at a window opposite his own.

It so startled Keene as well-nigh to carry him off his feet. He recoiled with a gasp and stare, and in the faint glow from the curtained window he now beheld, motionless as a statue of bronze, the burly figure of the head of the local police, Captain Elroy Mason!

"Good heavens, Mason——"

"Silence!" hissed the latter, and without more ado he seized Keene by the arm and drew him hurriedly away.

Not until they were well away from the house, in fact, had gained the open street, was the silence between them broken. Then Captain Mason said deeply, in accents of grim triumph:

"Well, Detective Keene, the game is now run down!"

Sheridan Keene was rather nonplused for the moment, and had quietly yielded to the officer's interference.

"How the dickens, Mason," he demanded, "did you surmise the fact that Banker Slocum might be involved in this affair?"

Captain Mason laughed grimly, in a half-triumphant way.

"By the charred segment of the will of which you told me," he dryly admitted. "It appeared to involve so much property, and Barnard having been the elder Slocum's legal adviser, and, their estates adjoining, I suspected it might point there. So I slipped out here to-night merely to have

an informal chat with the banker—but I don't find it necessary!"

"Then you think he killed Barnard?"

"No, I do not."

"Ah!" was all the detective said.

"I think he told the truth," resumed the police captain; "I think he left Joe Barnard alive when he departed that night."

"But who, then?"

"Humph! You seem to have great faith in this girl, Sybil Howard! She was the first to return home that night, and immediately after Slocum departed. I think she found her uncle had been unable to coerce the banker."

"And then?"

"She shot him, I think, in order to personally have that power of which she has just boasted, and to cast suspicion of the crime upon Slocum. It was the impulsive deed of a woman crazed by love."

Sheridan did not argue the point. He was far from convinced that this girl, with all her beauty, education, and refinement, could have murdered the man who had been a father to her since childhood.

"And what do you propose doing about it, Captain Mason?" he asked, with curious dryness.

"Humph! it's plain enough what should be done!" was the curt reply. "The girl should be arrested on a warrant charging her with the crime. Chief Watts left me to act in the matter, and I shall do so!"

A curious smile had stolen over Detective Keene's mobile face.

"Do you think the way is now clear to sustaining the allegation?" he asked quietly.

"I think it is clear to forcing her to a full confession," Captain Mason answered decidedly. "She, not being cognizant of the information we possess, it will be an easy matter to break her down."

"And her arrest?"

"Can be made to-morrow morning! If Watts wants it deferred he can telephone me!"

"So he can! I'd overlooked that!" drawled Keene oddly.

"Ah, here comes an inbound car! I think I'll take it!" he added shortly.

"Good night, then!" cried Captain Mason hurriedly.

"Good night!" came back the detective's cheery answer.

CHAPTER IX.

DETECTIVE KEENE.

Detective Keene did not remain long on the car. He rode for a hundred yards or thereabouts, sufficiently far to feel sure of evading Captain Mason's observation, then sprang off and hastened through a cross street, and shaped a course that would bring him back to the Slocum residence.

His fine, earnest face now wore a different expression, and an ugly determination fired his thoughtful blue eyes. Yet his mind was not upon Captain Mason and his suspicion, nor upon the mystery of the case itself, even; he was thinking of the recent utterances of Sybil Howard, of this girl's magnificent beauty, and of the fate possibly awaiting her.

To him there was an irresistible pathos in the romance of her life, the distressful fear and hopelessness with which she had loved so dearly. He could not but admire her resolution and courage, despite that they had been so ill directed in these last hours.

Yet he would not believe her guilty of the crime. He could not think, even in the light of all the evidence against her, that she had slain Joseph Barnard that fateful night, and then set fire to the will that might have ruined the father of him she so passionately loved, and now conspired to gain.

It was after nine o'clock when Sheridan Keene again approached the banker's residence. On this occasion he rang the bell at the front door, and asked for the son, George Slocum. Fortunately, he found the young man at home, and they met in the reception room, the door of which the detective coolly closed.

"See here, George!" he exclaimed frankly, when greetings had been passed; "you and I were good friends in college, and I think you had a tolerably high opinion of my loyalty as a friend. I wish to ask you a few questions, George, and for you to answer them confidentially!"

"To what do they relate?" asked Slocum, in grave surprise.

"They may have a bearing on the murder of Joseph Barnard," said Keene frankly. "But I will state, here and now, George, that I am not aiming to do you or yours any harm. Rather the contrary!"

"I believe you, Shed! You may ask the questions, and I will answer them if I think best."

"Very good! First, then, have you any idea of marrying?"

"Well, in a vague way I have been thinking of it. Still I have said nothing about it as yet, not even to the girl I have in mind."

"Who is the girl you have in mind?"

George Slocum laughed and colored.

"Well, since you appear so desirous of knowing, her name is Sybil Howard!"

Keene caught his breath with a gasp and threw both hands above his head.

"Oh, my God! I'm so glad!" he cried, with an involuntary betrayal of emotion.

"What do you mean?" demanded Slocum suspiciously.

"Don't ask me! At least, not now! Tell me rather, what there is in the rumor that you were about to marry one Norton girl?"

"Humph! Nothing at all but idle gossip!"

"Have you heard it before now?"

"Yes, I have," nodded Slocum, frowning slightly. "But I am not the man to notice gossip and rumors. I've not bothered even to deny the report."

"Will you answer me one more question, Slocum?" demanded Keene earnestly, and with suspiciously glistening eyes. "I know you will answer it truthfully!"

"You may ask it."

"What is your opinion of the character of Sybil Howard?"

George Slocum drew himself up with genuine and lofty pride, looking the detective squarely in the eye.

"Sybil Howard!" he said feelingly. "Why, I have known her since childhood! She is as good, grand, and lovable a girl as ever stood in shoes. I have loved her

since boyhood, and she me! If I were not as sure of her love as I am, I should have been on my knees to her long ago! But she knows well enough that I love her!"

Keene turned away with breast heaving and walked to the window.

"How blind they have been!" thought he. Presently he turned back and said:

"That's all, George, and many thanks! Now I wish you to bring me into friendly touch with your father. Will you do it?"

"Surely, if you wish it."

This was easily and readily accomplished, and a few minutes later the detective was seated alone with the banker, in the very room in which Sybil Howard had been received less than an hour before.

Philip Slocum's face was pale and haggard, that of a man whose burden of sorrow and anxiety was becoming greater than man can bear. It moved a feeling of pity in the detective, for Slocum's public record was above reproach.

Keene's eyes wore a look not inviting equivocation, however, and his voice carried a ring of semisubdued austerity not wisely to be ignored.

"I noticed that your son, in presenting me to you, Mr. Slocum," he said, "did not prepare you for this interview by informing you of my vocation."

"Your vocation, Mr. Keene?" the banker murmured tremulously. "No, he did not."

"I am a detective, sir."

"A detective!"

Slocum echoed the word with a convulsive twitching of his slender hands, but otherwise maintained his outward calmness.

"Yes, a detective," said Keene shortly. "But I am here rather as a friend than a foe. I want you to give me some information, which I hope may redound to your advantage. Be that as it may, a confession of the truth must be had. Mr. Slocum, what do you know about the killing of Mr. Barnard?"

The banker drew a long breath, then seemed to nerve himself to take the position Keene had invited and appeared prepared to compel.

"I know absolutely nothing about it!" he declared huskily, yet with firmness.

"Haven't you been under the coercion of Barnard in a way? Give me the whole truth, sir!"

"I admit that I have."

"Tell me how?"

"In early life I secretly married a good and beautiful girl, my present wife. My father opposed this. To coerce me to his whim, he made a will disinheriting me and giving his property to charity, in event of my marriage to this girl. Barnard, who was my father's attorney, and an unprincipled and crafty scamp, advised the making of this will, and it was intrusted to his care and keeping."

"Go on, sir."

"When my father lay dying, Barnard and I were alone with him. My father asked me if I was still resolved to marry the girl. I already was married to her, sir; but I denied the fact, and promised to yield to his wish. It was the lie of a young man who believed he had a right to marry whom his heart cherished, and a right to inherit what justly should become his. It seemed to satisfy my father. He turned to Barnard, whom he implicitly trusted, and commanded him to destroy the will, which the lawyer still had in keeping."

"And which Barnard did not do?"

"Far from it, sir! Since I was already married to the girl, the lawyer had me helplessly in his power. He suppressed the will, however, and threw the entire estate into my hands by lineal descent."

"And since has bled and coerced you to his liking?"

"Alas, yes!" groaned the banker. "The half could not be told! Despite his crafty pretensions, Barnard was a knave of the shrewdest kind."

"Are you aware, Mr. Slocum, that that will has been destroyed by fire and now can never be executed?"

"Yes, I am aware of it."

"When did you learn that fact?"

"On the day of Barnard's death. I heard that a will had been found burned, and I knew well to what will it referred."

"How did you know?"

The banker hesitated.

The detective leaned forward and said sternly:

"Tell me! I want the whole truth! You were with Barnard on the night of his murder!"

"My God!" gasped Slocum, pale as marble. "How do you know that?"

"Because," said Keene bluntly; "I overheard your interview with Sybil Howard in this room a brief hour ago!"

Slocum fell back in his chair like a man suddenly stricken with death.

"Heaven help me, I am lost! I am lost!" he muttered brokenly, as if this straw were indeed the last. "I confess it! I can sustain this soul-sickening conflict no longer! My one blind lie has pursued me relentlessly for more than twenty years, and even to this! I confess that I was with him! I confess it, sir! But"—and now he started up with sudden, passionate fervor—"as God hears me, Mr. Keene, I did not harm Joseph Barnard!"

Detective Keene sat apparently unmoved by this piteous declaration.

"Why have you not come forward, Mr. Slocum, and stated that you were Barnard's visitor that night?" he demanded gravely.

"Because I believed my visit was not known; and I feared that, if it were, the circumstantial evidence, tending to incriminate me in his death, might be greater than I could refute. I heard that the will was destroyed, and I have relied upon escaping suspicion. Alas! it was not to be! Another, a woman, now, has risen phœnixlike out of the dead ashes of my own ignobility!"

Looking at this subdued and broken man, whose proud record in the eyes of the world had been as clear and bright as the light of midday, Sheridan Keene found it as hard to believe him guilty of the murder as even Sybil Howard.

But the one and indisputable fact persistently remained —some person had killed Joseph Barnard!

Impelled to turn his inquiries upon a new line, Keene leaned forward and said sharply:

"Attend to me, Mr. Slocum! We will assume that you did not kill Barnard! At what time, then, did you leave his house?"

The banker pulled himself together, and his eyes brightened.

"Just before eleven o'clock," he rejoined readily.

"How long had you been with him?"

"About two hours."

"Discussing the steps he wished you to take in order to influence your son to marry his niece?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you consent to attempt this?"

"I agreed to consult George, and to advise him to marry Sybil."

Keene seized with avidity upon this point. If the banker spoke the truth, he at that time would have had no special occasion for killing the knavish lawyer.

"When you left the house, Mr. Slocum," continued Keene, "you returned home by the way of the woods. Why so?"

"Because it is the shorter way! For that reason only!"

"Did you see Sybil Howard?'

"I did not.'

"She was returning home from a concert in company with your son. How far is it from the edge of the woods, where they both observed you, to the Barnard house?"

"About three hundred yards, I should say."

Keene sized up the situation with a single thought. If the banker had left Barnard alive, and Sybil also was innocent, the fatality must necessarily have occurred within the few minutes occupied by George and Sybil in approaching the house after the banker's departure. Otherwise the report of the revolver must have been heard.

"See here, Mr. Slocum!" exclaimed Keene, with augmented earnestness; "did you part in an ordinary way with Barnard?"

"I think so. What do you mean?"

"What was he doing when you rose to go?"

"He was filling his pipe."

"Filling his pipe!" echoed the detective, with a sudden, startled look leaping to his eyes. "Did he walk to the door with you?"

"He did; yes."

"Had you had any serious altercation with him?"

"Nothing violent, sir, on my word!"

"Yet, Mr. Slocum," cried Keene sternly, "he had brought his revolver down to the library."

"I know that, sir. He perhaps feared I might become violent in my opposition with his coercion; but I never stoop to personal violence, sir. I knew that he had his revolver there, moreover, for I saw it."

"You saw it?"

"Yes, sir, I did, despite that he had aimed to conceal it, and yet have it handy. It was under some of the loose papers which lay upon the leaf of the table at his elbow."

Detective Keene started slightly, caught himself as quickly, and then abruptly rose to his feet.

"I think that is all, Mr. Slocum," he said quietly; yet the look on his handsome face was one that should have made his hearer wonder. "Yes, I think that is all!"

"Have you nothing——"

"Nothing to impart to you to-night, sir!" interposed Keene, taking his hat. "Oh, by the way!"

He turned back from the door, which he had already partly opened; and, approaching Philip Slocum, laid his hand upon the shoulder of the sorrow-stricken man.

"Not a word about Sybil Howard and her visit here to-night, nor about yourself, nor about this crime!" he said, with stern and startling significance. "Not a word —till you have heard from me again!"

CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE FATALITY.

It was late in the evening when Detective Keene arrived in town, and he did not report at headquarters. He felt, in fact, that there was really no occasion for it, despite that his abrupt termination of the interview with Philip Slocum, and his immediate departure from the banker's residence, would seem to indicate something out of the ordinary.

It was nearly noon the following day, moreover, before he made his official report to Chief Inspector Watts, the latter having been called from his office by a consultation in State Street.

Yet Detective Keene's report, and the private conference which ensued between him and Chief Watts, although comparatively brief, were followed by speedy and startling results.

Both left headquarters shortly after noon, and together took an automobile for the suburbs.

"Riverlawn Park! House of the late Lawyer Barnard!" were the directions which Chief Watts gave to the chauffeur.

"Have you heard from Captain Mason this morning?" asked Keene as they rode away.

"Not personally," replied the chief inspector. "Garrett tells me I was called up by him over the telephone about ten o'clock, but he left no definite message. I just tried to communicate with him, but his sergeant at the station told me he was out."

"Do you know, chief, I really think he means to arrest Sybil Howard."

Chief Inspector Watts smiled oddly.

"Let him if he likes," he rejoined quietly. "Perhaps he will ultimately decide that there is nothing in hasty action."

"It was one o'clock when they arrived at Riverlawn Park, and a closed automobile was drawn up at the entrance to the Barnard driveway.

Chief Watts shot a swift glance at the chauffeur.

"Driver, who is your passenger?"

"What are you after wanting to know for?" was the curt rejoinder.

"Answer my question, driver, or you'll find yourself without a license!"

The chief's grave voice had undergone no change, but something in his cold, blue eyes suddenly brought the chauffeur to his senses.

"Sure, sir!" he exclaimed, touching his hat, "it's Captain Mason, of the police."

Without a word, Chief Inspector Watts led Keene up the driveway to the house. The screen door only was closed, and he did not pause to ring. He strode unceremoniously into the hall, and turned to the parlor, from which voices were heard.

There in the warm glow of midday sunshine, yet pale and tremulous herself, and with tears of distress in her splendid eyes, stood Sybil Howard. And confronting her, imposing in blue and brass, was the burly figure of the captain of the police.

Only these words, ere he entered, reached Detective Keene's ears:

"There is no alternative, Miss Howard! You are under arrest and must go with me!"

Then Captain Mason heard the steps in the hall, and drew back in blank amazement when Chief Inspector Watts came over the threshold.

"Good morning, captain!" said the chief, in an indescribably quiet way. "Sorry that I didn't get you by wire this morning. But it's just as well—now!"

Sybil had swung round when Detective Keene entered, and one glance of passionate scorn flashed from her flooded eyes.

"Do I owe this outrageous arrest to you, sir?" she demanded, with insuperable scorn.

"Well, hardly!" said Keene dryly, with a toss of his head.

"I think, Captain Mason," here Chief Inspector Watts interposed, half aside; "that we had better defer this arrest for a time. I should have suggested it earlier, could I have reached you. We have run out here to have one more look at the library. Come along with us, captain."

"Why, surely, chief!" nodded Mason, who had scarce recovered from his surprise. "I really hope——"

"Oh, there's no harm done! Come this way."

And, while a curious smile stole over Keene's face, at the bland suavity of his superior, Chief Watts led the way through the hall and into the room in which the late Joseph Barnard had met his untimely death.

The room had been put in order, but the general furnishings were as previously described.

Without delay, Chief Watts knelt upon the floor and briefly examined the under portion of the square mahogany table, which the lawyer had used for a desk.

"We are right, Detective Keene!" he presently exclaimed, rising to his feet. "The bar is very loose, and in match marks under the leaf is written one of Barnard's careless habits!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Captain Mason, with a sort of nonplused look on his face. "What does this mean, Chief Watts? You are right in what?"

"Simply this," said Chief Inspector Watts, in his quiet way, and there was an irrepressible twinkle in the eyes meeting Mason's; "Barnard bade Slocum good night at the door. He came back here filling his pipe, and closed this library door behind him."

"Well?"

"He took a match from the box on the table to light his pipe. The leaf of the table was raised. His revolver lay upon it, under the loose papers. A little excited, perhaps, after his scene with Slocum, with considerable force he struck the match on the under side of the table leaf, and by accident threw the bar which upheld the leaf. The blow bruised his hand and broke his ring. The leaf dropped instantly, revolver, papers, and all. Barnard stooped to catch them. The weapon struck the floor and exploded, and the ball found the heart of the stooping man. The lighted match he held fired the fallen papers.

"And there, Captain Mason, you have the true cause of Joseph Barnard's death!"

For all of a minute Captain Elroy Mason stood motionless and silent, his face a picture as if chagrin had somewhere a place in his subdued feelings.

Then Chief Inspector Watts burst out laughing.

"Explain it to him farther, Detective Keene!" he said quietly. "I have a word to say to another."

And while Sheridan Keene, flushed with genuine pleasure, disclosed to Mason how his recent interview with Philip Slocum had suggested the true cause of the accident which had befallen the designing lawyer, the chief inspector returned to the parlor and had a brief but earnest talk with Sybil Howard. Yet it was gentle and kindly in the superlative degree.

When Detective Keene and his companion came out through the hall the girl was at the threshold of the parlor door, and Chief Watts was bidding her adieu.

She was crying, and her lips were quivering, but on her splendid face there had come a light that never shone on land or sea.

"Oh, Mr. Watts! Mr. Watts!" she was saying sobbingly, "you have made me so happy! You will have made us all so happy! How—oh, sir! how am I to thank you?"

Chief Inspector Watts looked down at her, with something like a very tender smile in his expressive eyes.

"Me? Thank me?" he rejoined, half jokingly. "Don't do it, Miss Howard! Instead—thank Detective Keene!"

She turned and saw, nearly beside her, the man to whom she had felt she owed all the ills that had befallen her, and on whom she so lately had bestowed so much of bitterness and scorn.

A quick flush mantled her cheeks.

Then, impulsively, with breast heaving and tears flooding her eyes anew, she eagerly gave Sheridan Keene both her hands.

THE END.

A LION TAMER'S POWER.

A lion tamer's power lies not only in his courage and self-possession, but in his understanding the temper of the animals. It is perilous for any one but the tamer himself to attempt any liberties with them, however indifferent and well disposed they may seem.

A noted lion tamer relates in his memoirs a terrible adventure. He was sitting at the entrance to the menagerie, and the entertainment was about to begin, when he heard a piercing cry. This was followed by a furious roaring, and cries of "Help, help!" by many voices. He rushed in, and this is an account of what happened:

"All eyes were turned toward one of the cages. It was appalling. A poor fellow in my employ, had been lifted from the ground, and was suspended outside the cage in the claws of four lions, one of which was eating his arms. One glimpse of that horrible sight, and I ran, reflecting in a second that to go round by the cages and get in by the ordinary entrance would involve a fatal delay, and decided on the desperate expedient of raising the grating on the side toward the spectators, and so crawling into the cage.

"How I did it, how it happened that I was not caught and mangled, I do not know. But suddenly I was on my feet in the midst of that savage feast, with neither stick nor whip, and only my fists for weapons. I struck and I commanded. The lions fell back, and let fall their prey. I hurried out of the cage, and was greeted with

enthusiastic applause. I thought the poor fellow was dead. But he was taken to the hospital, his wounds were dressed, and he recovered. Then I asked him how it happened. He said:

"'When I passed those gentlemen'—he always spoke courteously of the lions—'I wished to caress them. Three were asleep, and one was awake; that one misunderstood my attention. He waked his comrades, seized me, and but for you I should certainly have made a meal for them.'"

The heroic lion tamer goes on to relate that the king, being informed of his act, decorated him publicly, and the people fêted him and loaded him with honors. On this occasion, he says, though he was not used to being afraid, he was so agitated that his limbs shook; he was faint, and could hardly see. He soon recovered himself, however, and his pleasure in this public recognition of his bravery was marred only by a regret that his father could not be there to enjoy it.

JACK JUNK.

By ORION.

On a fine May morning, in 18—, I sailed as second mate in the clipper-built schooner *Quickstep* for Rio Janeiro, via Havana. With fair winds and genial weather, we passed the usually stormy Hatteras, crossed the Gulf Stream, and in just twelve days from the time of starting we anchored under the guns of Moro Castle, in the harbor of Havana. We had on board a jolly tar, who gloried in the name of Jack Junk. Jack was a good fellow, and every inch a sailor. During the night watches, when we were tired of story-telling, he would often entertain us with a tune on his favorite violin.

Sometimes at night when I hear the faint, far-off sounds of a violin on the Hudson, I think of poor Jack, and imagine that I can hear him singing, in his clear, manly tones, his favorite song:

"Don't you hear the jolly tars
Singing as they come?
O dle din kum, du dle din kum,
Di did le dum."

When we arrived at Havana, Jack and his friend, Joe Letson—"Jolly Joe," we called him—received permission to spend an afternoon on shore.

It seems, from what we afterward learned, that while drinking at a tippling saloon, Joe got into an affray with a Cuban, and knocked him down. Several natives coming to the rescue of their friend, a general row ensued. Knives were drawn, and Joe stabbed his assailant.

Jack, who had remained a sober, inactive spectator, hurried him away; but the boat not being at hand, he could not get him on board the schooner. The case was now desperate. The shouts of the crowd in the adjoining street could be distinctly heard. Jack hurried Joe along the shore toward a group of water casks. He dumped the almost insensible Joe into the only empty one, hastily hammered in the head with a stone, and seated himself on the top of it. He had hardly gained this position, when the crowd appeared, shouting and brandishing their multifarious weapons. The leader, who spoke very good English, tapped Jack on the shoulder, and asked for his friend—meaning Joe.

"Don't know," replied Jack, folding his arms; "gone to grass, I guess."

After tipping several of the casks, and finding them filled, the crowd dispersed in search for Joe. Several of them kept a strict watch over the boat, which had now landed some distance above, so that there was no chance to get Joe on board the schooner by that means.

But Junk's ingenuity did not yet forsake him. Unobserved by the spies, whose backs were turned, he tipped the cask into the water, taking care to keep the bung up. It being ebb tide, it slowly receded from the shore.

Full an hour Jack watched the floating cask. At last it floated near the schooner. The boat's crew were waiting for Joe and Jack. The latter now sauntered carelessly toward the landing, stepped into the boat, and whispered to the crew. They pushed off, and in a short time were on board the schooner. Jack immediately fished up the cask, knocked in the head, and liberated the astonished and thoroughly sobered Joe.

* * * * * * *

At sunrise the next morning the gloomy walls of old Moro were faintly seen on our starboard quarter. We were skimming the waves in the direction of Rio Janeiro. All of us were as happy as pleasant weather and Jack's violin could make us till we arrived at latitude fifteen degrees north, when, one noon, we descried a sail. She was bearing directly toward us. The captain, from the topmast, viewed her with his glass.

As he descended, his face wore a troubled expression.

"What do you make her?" I inquired.

"A pirate," he replied. "She carries a black flag."

"What shall we do?" asked the first mate.

"What can we do? We can do nothing."

"Cap'n," said Jack Junk, advancing, and snapping his tobacco box, out of which he had just taken a huge mouthful, "I think I can settle that mis'able creature."

"You? How?"

"You know that old cannon in the hold among the ballast?"

"Well?"

"I'll rig that up. We've got plenty o' powder, and Dick Darling can shoot like a bush ranger."

"And the balls?"

"Find 'em. What d'ye say, cap'n?"

"Do what you please. It won't amount to much."

With the help of some of the crew, Jack raised the old cannon to the deck. It was then mounted, and loaded with powder.

The pirate was now but a short distance from us. She fired a shot across our bow, upon which we "laid to."

Four boats were lowered from her sides, and filled with men.

Dick Darling stood by the old cannon, waiting for Jack, who was below deck, "finding the balls." The latter soon came upon deck, with several glass bottles. No one but Joe knew what was in them. One of them was hastily put into the cannon. The pirates were fast approaching us. Dick aimed the cannon at the leading boat, and fired. As the smoke cleared away, we saw them jumping from the boat into the water. The other three boats were hastening to the rescue of their unfortunate companions—while a fifth, manned by two men, had mysteriously appeared upon the scene of action, and was skimming through the water toward the pirate brig.

Another shot was fired with unerring aim, at the nearest of the boats. The result was as before. The pirates were in the greatest confusion. Most of them were jumping into the water. As we loaded the cannon with the last bottle, there was a shot from the pirate brig. One of the boats was shivered to pieces, and its crew either drowned or were killed by the ball.

We were in as great confusion as the pirates. We could not understand the state of affairs.

There was another flash from the pirate vessel. The remaining boat, which had a crew, was sunk, and its dozen pirates were left floundering in the water.

During this time we had floated a considerable distance from the boats and the brig. A few of the pirates were clinging to the two boats, which they had before abandoned. The rest were drowned.

The brig now began to glide toward us. The black flag was pulled down, and a white one raised in its place. As it came nearer, we saw that the man at the wheel was Jolly Joe.

We looked around our deck; both Jack and Joe were missing. The mystery of the fifth boat was now revealed.

As the brig "came to," under our larboard quarter, the shrill notes of Jack's violin came floating over the water, as he sat on the bowsprit, playing and singing:

"Don't you hear the jolly tars
Singing as they come?
O dle dink, a du dle tink,
A di did le dum."

We picked up the half-drowned pirates, bound them, and confined them in the hold. Our crew was divided between the two vessels. I was put in command of the pirate brig, with Jack and Jolly Joe as mates.

"Well, Jack," said I, when we were fully under way, "what was in those bottles?"

"Nitric acid."

We arrived safely at Rio Janeiro, where the pirates were given into the hands of the authorities, and the vessel delivered over to the American consul.

As usual, Jack obtained permission to go ashore, and when, at night, the boat was sent for the absentees, Jack was found floating in the water, with a great gash in his temple. He was dead. Poor Jack! Many a tear trickled down sunburned cheeks as we saw his manly forehead clotted with blood.

We buried him

"On the beach by the sea,
'Neath the evergreen tree."

There, on that South American shore, far, far from his native land, lies all that remains of poor Jack Junk.

ONE WAY TO KEEP A DOG.

I was traveling leisurely through the West, when, seeing a rather neat barber's shop one day, and being aware that my hair needed cutting, I went in and submitted myself to the shears. I did so with some little uneasiness, for those shears were vast and murderous-looking weapons, which appeared as if they were ordinarily employed in cutting sheet iron instead of men's hair.

The barber went through many preparations which gave me a chance to observe that his dog, a wiry-looking little bull terrier, with a singular droop in his left eye, and a vicious expression about his cropped ears, was eying me intently from a little to one side of me on the floor.

The barber at last set to work at my back hair very deliberately. The bull terrier still eyed me as a cat watches a mouse, now tipping his head a trifle on one side, now on the other.

I stood this eager scrutiny in silence for a few minutes, but presently my curiosity led me to speak.

"Hum!" I said; "a sharp-looking dog, that of yours."

"Sharp!" the man laughed. "No more intelligent beast than him in all the country to-day, sir."

"Can you tell me why he is watching me in that way?"

"Ah, there's the intelligence of him, sir. Sometimes it happens, you know, sir, as how I clips a little off the top of a gent's ear with the shears, sir. An' then you should see how Beauty—that's the dog's name—lights on that bit of ear in an instant!"

This very interesting piece of information sent such a cold chill down my back as I had seldom felt before. I did not dare to speak and beg the man to be careful, lest my agitation should cause him to make the unlucky stroke with the shears.

I certainly did not dare to move. The man took a long time with his hair cutting, and all that time Beauty eyed me keenly and hungrily from the floor, while the cold drops of perspiration were starting out on my forehead.

Fortunately, I escaped mutilation; but in my dreams, for weeks, I was haunted by the vision of that expectant bull terrier watching with his malevolent eye for the tip of my ear. I see him in an occasional vision still, and I never expect to be quite rid of him."

BONES IN THE HUMAN BODY.

The skeleton of a full-grown human being consists of 200 distinct bones, exclusive of the little bones in the internal ear. They are thus distributed: The spine, twenty-six bones; skull, eight; face, fourteen; ribs and breast bone, twenty-six; upper extremities, sixty-four; lower extremities, sixty-two.

The actual number of distinct bones varies at different periods of life, many bones which are separate in youth becoming united together in old age.

HOW THE SOLOMON ISLANDERS OBTAIN FIRE.

They select a stake of dry, soft wood, about as thick as a man's wrist. From this they slice off a few chips in one place, so as to make a flat surface for rubbing. The stake is then placed on the ground in front of the operator, who sits at one end of it, and holds it firmly between his toes. He then takes a piece of hard wood, shaped like a pencil, and, holding it with both hands, begins rubbing up and down the flat surface of the stake. A groove is soon formed in the stake, and a dark-colored dust, which is pushed to the end of the groove. By and by this dust begins to smolder. Next a piece of dried touchwood is applied, and blowed upon until it glows. In this way, and with perfectly dry wood, a native will produce fire in something less than a minute. But the art is not easily learned, and a European, who lived on the island for some time, says that although he had tried until his shoulder ached, he was never able to produce more than smoke.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Tell How to Live on Four Cents a Day.

Marcus M. Wood, the aged philosopher, of Webster, Mass., has solved the problem of the high cost of living. He and his wife live on 4 cents a day.

Mr. and Mrs. Wood occupy a small farm one mile from Webster. For twenty years Mr. Wood has read chapters of medicine in an effort to prolong life. He is 75 years old. Recently when broken down in health, he bought his home on high land. On this farm the couple have lived for 4 cents a day. On holidays Mrs. Wood prepares a dinner at a cost of about 10 cents.

Wood gives the following as a daily menu:

Breakfast—Fried Indian meal pudding, butter, Concord grape jelly, doughnuts, wheat sherbet.

Dinner—Tomato soup, buckwheat pudding, doughnuts, potatoes, grape jelly, butter, bread, and cracked wheat and milk.

Supper—Buckwheat cakes, gravy, butter, plum jelly, cracked flint wheat, drink.

The grapes for the preserves and jellies are grown on the Wood farm, as are the wheat and apples. The doughnuts are baked by Mrs. Wood. Tea and coffee are injurious to health, according to Mr. Wood, who crossed the two drinks off his menu several years ago. He said:

"I do not claim the business man of the city can live on four cents a day, but I do claim that any one who will live on the farm can practice my daily routine of work and pleasure and live for three or four cents a day. It is necessary to live on the farm and eat the fruits and vegetables of the garden. With one thousand dollars you can live handsomely the remainder of your life. Meals at four cents a day will average about fifteen dollars for the twelve months."

At his farm Wood works a little and reads much. He believes he has a plan to reduce the high cost of living by India runner ducks.

"Sell the piano and buy ducks," is his advice. Wood has experimented with the ducks, and finds that at a time when hens are very coy about coming across with eggs, his India runners are producing eggs of all sizes. Five eggs a week each duck is the average.

Wood says: "Each duck will lay two hundred and forty eggs a year, eggs that weigh thirty ounces to the dozen, and flavor just as good as hens' eggs, although the whites are a little tougher."

Frozen Goldfish Revive.

Three goldfish, belonging to Mrs. William Connolly, of Great Valley, N. Y., were frozen solidly in a cake of ice which filled the bowl in which they were kept. They remained in this frozen condition for thirty hours, but after being thawed out appeared to be as much alive as before.

Gives Boy Scouts Forty Acres.

A forty-acre playground, on which the Boy Scouts in Kansas City may be thoroughly trained in the art of woodcraft has been secured for the Kansas City, Mo., organization of the boys through the efforts of friends of the movement in Kansas City, Mo. A man owning a tract of timber land near Kansas City, Mo., has turned it over to the Scouts for their use. The boys will hew trees, build a log cabin, and make practical demonstrations of their studies.

Horse With a Brass Nose.

It is being demonstrated by Mike, the faithful old horse of the Mount Healthy, Ohio, street-cleaning department, that a real nose is quite a superfluous thing.

If Mike had relied upon his own natural nose, he would have been dead long ago. When Mike's nose ceased to work properly, and it seemed he would die, Joe Stoppel, his owner, consulted a horse doctor, and the horse doctor made a hole in Mike's neck and opened the wind pipe and put a tube into it. At the outer end of the tube he fixed a brass disk. All the air the horse breathes goes through the disk, up the tube, and down Mike's windpipe. On cold days Mike's brass nose emits steam just like a regular nose.

"And he's better than ever now," says Stoppel. "Giddap, Mike!"

Racing Auto Kills Wolf.

Running down and killing a big wolf with his racing automobile was the feat performed by Joseph E. Neuhouse, who lives a few miles south of Ethan, S. D. Neuhouse was traveling over a highway near the Missouri River late in the day, and just as he swiftly turned a curve he saw a wolf loping along the road in front of the car. The animal, instead of making its way to one side of the road, continued trotting along directly ahead. Taking this as a challenge for a test of speed, the driver of the auto opened up his machine and gradually overhauled the wolf. Soon the front of the automobile touched the bushy tail of the animal, and after a final burst of speed the automobile again steadily approached the wolf, which at last disappeared under the car. Stopping, Neuhouse discovered that the wolf was gasping its last, the back of the animal having been broken when the car ran upon it. Neuhouse brought the carcass to town as evidence of his prowess as a driver of a racing car, and will have the skin mounted.

Begin Invasion of Central Mexico.

"Huerta, the President of Mexico, must leave Mexico or die. We intend to fight our way to the capital and will seize the usurper unless he is driven out before we get there."

This is the declaration of General Pancho Villa, who is beginning the invasion of central Mexico, and he has sent the message to Huerta. After concentrating his army of 15,000 or more revolutionists at Torreon, Villa expects to push on rapidly to Mexico City. Heretofore his activities have been largely confined to the border States, where he has torn garrison after garrison from the hands of Huerta and by routing the Federals whenever he encountered them in open battle has gained control of northern Mexico.

That he will meet with bitter resistance in the movement southward Villa admits. The Federal strongholds

are more closely knit and can reënforce one another more readily than they could in the north. The revolutionists have every confidence that they will take Torreon, which is 525 miles south of the United States border, with a population of 25,000. Federal troops have been massed from the east and south at Torreon, prepared to make a supreme effort to prevent Villa from continuing on his way to the capital.

Villa realizes that he is entering upon the crucial stage of his campaign. He is relying upon the loyalty of his army and the terror which has so often been inspired among the Huerta followers by the cry: "Villa is coming!" It is said he is the only general in the revolution who can depend on his men, the only man in Mexico who is unafraid to walk unarmed where he pleases. In many ways he is the most remarkable character that Mexico has produced—a cunning leader, a cold, daring warrior, and a remorseless victor.

When he took to the field against Huerta, Villa determined that the usurper, as he calls him, must be overthrown. He has been serving under General Carranza, who is head of the Constitutionalists, and has shown no disloyalty to his chief. But any movement for peace in Mexico that does not mean the overthrow of Huerta will encounter a stumblingblock in the person of Pancho Villa. Those who know him best say he will never submit to compromise.

"Terms of peace must come from Mexico City in the form of news that the usurper has been overthrown," said Villa recently. It was the statement he has always made.

Many Die in Batavia Panic.

Fifty-eight children, sixteen women, and one man were killed during a panic caused by a fire in a moving-picture show on a plantation in the Dutch residency of Surahaya, Dutch East Indies. Most of the victims were trampled to death or suffocated.

Explosion Disrobes a Child.

Edna Webster, nine years old, of Pottstown, Pa., was completely disrobed by flying iron but escaped injury when a frozen water tank exploded in the home of her father, Walter Webster. The explosion also blew a big stove to pieces and set the house on fire. However, the concussion burst a pipe in the bathroom, and the kitchen was flooded with water, extinguishing the blaze.

Facts You May Not Know.

Five hundred and forty pounds of blood pass through the heart in one hour.

The average life of a cat is said to be fifteen years.

Potatoes in Greenland do not grow larger than an ordinary marble.

The horse succumbs to an intensely cold temperature sooner than any other animal.

Some of the rivers of Siberia flow over ice many years old and almost as solid as rock.

Scientists have found a new source of vegetable ivory in the albumen of the fruit of a small palm growing prolifically in the French Sudan.

The greatest known depth of the ocean is 32,098 feet.

A motor cotton picker which works successfully and economically has been invented.

For testing the strength of paper, a machine has been invented in which a dial registers the pounds pressure to the square inch needed to puncture a piece of it with a plunger.

An eminent doctor says he has found a cyclist's pulse to beat as high as 250 times a minute immediately after making a fast mile. This illustrates the danger of speeding.

With plenty of water and without solid food, a horse will live twenty-five days; with solid food and without water he will only live five days.

The hair grows much faster in summer than in winter.

The longest plant in the world is said to be a species of tropical seaweed which grows sometimes 600 feet in length.

"Millionaire for Day" Hires Train and Band.

John J. McDevitt, known as "Millionaire for a Day McDevitt," left Wilkesbarre, Pa., recently in a special train to Washington, to offer to Congress and the nation a statue of himself, paid the Lehigh Valley Railroad $450, the cost of his train. McDevitt engaged the United States Marine Band as his Washington escort, and hired four men to act as guards on his train. He also engaged a band to escort him from a hotel to the train.

Once on the train, he had nothing to think about excepting spending the remainder of the $3,000 raised for his trip in providing for himself the comforts and luxuries of a one-day "money king."

Advertising in 1776.

A copy of the Pennsylvania *Packet*, recently discovered, dated July 8, 1776, contains the following advertisement:

"The war office calls upon all persons who know where flint stones can be secured to notify Congress."

In the same column the newspaper explained that the flints were to be used for rifles. Without the old flintlock there would have been no American independence—at least not for many years after the Boston Tea Party, if indeed the colonials, unarmed, could have mustered up courage to dump the lead-lined boxes into the bay.

Further perusal of the old newspaper shows Jamaica rum and sugar were offered for sale by the hogshead; a reward of $6 was offered for the return of a horse that had strayed away from the range, and a woman who had lost two cows rushed into print with the statement that the individual who would lead the bovines home again would be remunerated to the extent of $4.

Sheriff's sales occupy a column and a half, and the *Packet's* publisher takes space to announce "advertisements are thankfully received," adding that "unless subscribers pay their back dues at ten cents a copy it will be impossible to continue publication after another month."

Wrestle Becomes Town Fight.

A wrestling match at Kimball, S. D., between Al Ackerman and Charles Miller became a free-for-all battle between the backers of the two grapplers, when the latter became too rough. As Ackerman's following was from Gans Valley and Miller's from Kimball, it became a town fight. Eight of the local scrappers were badly injured.

Blunder Causes Wreck, Four Die.

A mistake in orders caused four persons to be killed, several others to be fatally injured, and many to be maimed and bruised, in a wreck on the Michigan Central Railway, four miles north of Jackson, Mich. Two speed-

ing trains, one a passenger and the other a freight, collided head on within a stone's throw of a siding where the freight should have been.

The dead are: Cal Johnson, engineer of the passenger train, Jackson, Mich.; E. S. Cochrane, Lansing, Mich.; Thomas J. Scroggie, Owosso, Mich.; J. B. Beck, Jackson, Mich.

Six persons were killed in a wreck at the same place last summer.

Woman Saves Fifteen from Fire Death.

Wrapping her head in a blanket, Mrs. Edward Walton, wife of the proprietor of a hotel in Homestead, Pa., stumbled through blazing halls and rooms to awaken fifteen guests. They escaped in their night clothes in time to avoid injury or death in the building, which burned quickly. The hotel was totally destroyed, with a loss of $35,000.

Old, but Likes to Ride Fast.

At the age of ninety-six, O. J. Stough, rich landowner of San Diego, Cal., stands as one of the most successful exponents of the outdoor life in southern California, motorist, swimmer, pedestrian, gardener, and money-getter—Stough is the embodiment of health.

Old age without senility. That is the situation with Stough.

There are no wavy, zigzag lines in his writing, such as usually characterize the writing of the aged, but the strong, firm hand of a business man in his prime.

For many years it has been Stough's custom to walk five or six miles a day. He attributes his good health and his firm step to this and other outdoor exercises. He is also fond of swimming.

Young Thorpe Star Athlete.

James Thorpe II., brother of Jim Thorpe, the famous Olympic-games athlete and member of the New York Giant baseball squad, now on tour of the world, is starting an athletic career at the Haskell Institute, at Lawrence, Kan., that promises to be as brilliant as that of the brother. Charles Wesley Thorpe is the younger athlete's real name, but he is known by all the students in the school as Jim, because of his athletic ability. He is a Sac and Fox Indian, and a leader in baseball and track athletics. Young Thorpe is only eighteen years old, and five feet ten inches tall.

The Endurance Race.

H. O. Weber, of Cody, Wyo., is to make a 5,000-mile horseback ride as pathfinder for the Maine to California endurance race, which will be held at the start of 1915.

Weber will start from Cody March 1 and will go by way of the north and south highway to Denver, Colo., thence to California, and from San Diego, Cal., to Bangor, Maine, by way of the Lincoln Highway. He will carry greetings from the governor of Wyoming and the San Diego Fair Association. The endurance race will start at Bangor next New Year's Eve. From 100 to 150 riders will compete, from all sections of the country.

State League Salary Limit $2,500.

The representatives of the New York State Baseball League were in session at Wilkesbarre, Pa., recently, considering, among other things, the salary limit. It was finally decided to maintain the limit at $2,500. Each club is to post a forfeit of $500 to live up to the agreement.

The eastern division of the league will begin the season on April 29 in the West, which means that Albany, Troy, Syracuse, and Utica will play a two weeks' series at Wilkesbarre, Scranton, Elmira, and Binghamton before opening at home. Each club will be allowed the privilege of a children's day. On these days in New York State the visiting club is to be paid $200 for being idle on a Saturday or Sunday, and in Pennsylvania $100. The league decided on a $75 guarantee for week-day games, $100 for Sundays, and $30 in case of rain.

The schedule meeting is to be held later at Utica.

Give $305,000,000 for the Mails.

The post-office appropriation bill, carrying a record-breaking total of $305,000,000, has been passed by the House, at Washington, D. C. It includes an amendment which extends to post-office clerks, letter carriers, rural free delivery carriers, mounted letter carriers, and post-office messengers full salary for one year for injuries received on duty, half salary for another year, if necessary, and $2,000 in case of death.

Old Soldier Long-distance Walker.

Although he is seventy-one years old and a veteran of the Civil War, S. G. Barnes, of Pittsburgh, Pa., thinks he is the best endurance walker of his age in the world. Consequently he has issued a challenge for a 100-mile race to be held during the annual G. A. R. encampment in Detroit, Mich., next summer. In it he agrees to beat any ten veterans, each of them to walk ten miles while he walks the entire one hundred miles.

In addition to this, Barnes offers two other concessions in that three of the ten men who oppose him may be Spanish-American instead of Civil War veterans; and that one of them may be Colonel J. L. Smith, the speed champion of the G. A. R.

Barnes has walked 100 miles in twenty-four hours quite often, and says he will forfeit $100 if he does not complete the proposed race between midnight and midnight.

Pioneers Hear Indian Music.

The monotonous, rhythmic thump of the Indian tom-tom with the quavering falsetto of the squaws as they danced the Omaha and Sun dances in circles of whirling war-bedecked savages, was made realistic when 200 gray-haired men and women gathered at Lincoln, Neb., in the annual meeting of the Territorial Pioneers' Association. The music was played on a phonograph with records procured by Professor M. R. Gilmore, of Nebraska University, who is arranging for their preservation.

Town Sees Money in its Hot Well.

If the water in the town well at Girard, Kan., remains hot, as it has done for some time, that town will be "made," according to its citizens. The opinion prevails that it will stay hot, too, for its temperature of 119 degrees has been maintained ever since the change came in the municipal waterworks.

The people think the well will convert the town into a health resort. They hope so, anyway, and have sent samples of the water to the State University for examination. If the water can turn hot in a day, Girard citizens ask why may it not be possible that it has acquired

mineral and medicinal properties. A slight diffusion of this radium of which there is now so much talk, they point out, would put Girard on the map as the Baden-Baden of Kansas, and they rather fancy that term.

Meanwhile all handles on water faucets marked "Cold" are being removed, and the citizens find their warm baths waiting, no matter how early they arise or how low the fire in the water heater.

Girard is chiefly interested now in knowing whether its city water is to stay hot. After all, it is not such a "calamity" to turn the faucet and get hot water when you expect cold.

All sorts of uses are contemplated for the hot water. In the first place, it is planned to utilize it in heating plants. If the temperature remains as at present, at 119 degrees, it is only necessary to keep it moving through radiators to supply heat adequate for ordinary weather.

The prospect of unlimited qualities of steaming water has brought rejoicing to many. Hotel keepers, restaurants, butchers, and barbers are whooping it up for the hot well. Most delighted of all are the housewives. With a prospect of all the hot water they want for scrubbing porches and washing windows, Girard promises to become a woman's paradise.

Many subterranean changes have been reported in this vicinity. George Fredericks, a farmer, twelve miles north of Girard, reported his well water too hot to drink. He did not then know of the condition in Girard.

In most of the deep wells the water has risen twenty-five feet or more to levels of twenty years ago, while many shallow wells are lower than they have been in years.

Makes and Unmakes a Town.

Martin Korff, of Rolla, Mo., formerly cashier of the defunct Bank of Everton, Ark., who pleaded guilty to embezzlement in Little Rock, is credited with having not only made Everton, but also with unmaking it. Two years ago, when that town had only half a dozen houses, he came there, organized a Commercial Club, and the town prospered. However, he was defeated for mayor, and it is charged he wrecked his bank and the town out of revenge.

Blinded, He Bars Jail Break.

Edward Luke, a deputy sheriff, is under medical treatment at Phoenix, Ariz., with his eyes full of red pepper, but thirty fairly desperate prisoners are still in jail because of his quick wit.

As Luke entered the jail "tank" to lock the men in their cells, Arthur Leonard, convicted murderer, approached and threw the pepper.

Luke staggered back through the door, slamming it behind him.

Red-haired Athletes Are Baseball Stars.

Red heads, young men with flaming red locks, are doing their share to make baseball, our great national game, an interesting as well as instructive sport. Two of the red heads are team leaders—Hughey Jennings, of the Detroit Tigers, and Charley Dooin, of the Philadelphia Nationals.

Baseball's most expensive bit of bric-a-brac is a red head. Marty O'Toole, the auburn-topped hurler of the Pittsburgh Pirates, cost $22,500. Pittsburgh acquired another flaming-locked player in the person of Mike Mowrey, who went there with Ed Konetchy and Bob Harmon, in exchange of several Pirates.

When Catcher Ivy Wingo, of the St. Louis Cardinals, removes his cap the sun goes into retirement. There's room for only one sun. The Browns have red heads in Shortstop Roche and the two Walkers, Clarence and Ernest.

Cincinnati has only one red top, Pitcher Red Ames. The Cubs have Red Corriden and Red Fire Williams, while the White Sox have Red McKee, whose hair is of a much more fiery hue than that of Hughey Jennings.

Washington had several red heads, but now has only the remnant of one. Pitcher Bob Groom has only a fringe of hair left, but what there is of it is of a reddish hue. New York has Outfielder Red Murray and Brooklyn Infielder Red Smith.

Bull Chases a Bright Skirt.

A bull being driven to the stockyards, at Sioux City, by H. Fish, became frightened and charged upon the man, goring him and his horse. Fish might have been killed, but a woman with a red skirt ran across the street, and the bull gave chase to her. He followed her up the steps to the First National Bank. The animal became wedged in the revolving door and was captured. The woman fainted in the arms of the cashier.

Federals Making Big Gains.

If announcements made by the officials of the Federal League prove true, the new organization in baseball circles, which promises to fight the American and National Leagues and their subordinate minor leagues, has made good progress against the "baseball trust."

The Federals announce that they have signed 127 ball players for the season, 83 of the number being former major leaguers. Announcement also was made that work on the new ball parks in the various cities of the circuit will begin next week, and that many more star ball players may be expected to sign contracts soon.

Quarrel Over Cedar Posts.

A double killing occurred at Pompey's Pillar, Mont., as the result of a quarrel over cedar posts. E. F. Gately, a stockman, and owner of several ranches, is said to have fired the first shot at Ed Williams, a cowboy, employed on a neighboring ranch, wounding him slightly. Williams backed into the street, shooting and mortally wounding Gately, who before he fell, fired two more bullets into Williams, killing him almost instantly.

Genius of 66 Found.

The German art world is discussing a newly discovered genius 66 years old, a landscape painter named Karl Hagemeister, whose works are found to be of such worth that the Prussian Royal Academy has recommended the kaiser to confer on him the coveted title of "Professor."

Hagemeister is the son of a humble vegetable grower, and he himself spent most of his life among cabbage and cauliflower patches, painting pictures as a hobby. In an interview in a recent newspaper Hagemeister says:

"For forty years not a soul bothered his head about me. Now, all of a sudden, I seem to be a celebrity. Picture dealers are running after me, my works are to be exhibited, and I am to become a professor.

"I ask my friends to believe that I am not to blame for

all these things, for truly I never bothered my head about such matters.

"That these honors come to me must be due to the fact that I never followed any school or cult—simply God's own untutored way."

Gets $60 a Month for Six Offices.

William S. Bennett, of Neptune City, N. J., receives $60 per month for holding down six different offices. Besides being chief of police, he is superintendent of streets, health inspector, truant officer, license collector, and janitor of the borough hall.

Two Tons of Gold on Way.

A shipment of two tons of unminted gold from Alaska will reach Seattle soon.

The routing of the gold has been kept secret, but it is probably being dog-teamed across the Yukon wastes to some port. It is the largest early spring shipment ever sent from Northern parts.

Goethals to Stay at Canal Zone Eighteen Months.

Colonel Goethals, who is in charge of the Panama Canal and work, and who wrote a letter to Mayor Mitchell, of New York, stating that he would accept the position of police commissioner of that city on two conditions, declares that his work at Panama will not be completed for eighteen months, and that he could not accept the position until he is through there, whether or not the conditions he named were complied with.

In his letter the canal builder stated that he would not consider the New York position unless he was given absolute authority in police affairs in New York, and also that the government at Washington place him on the retired list, as he would not resign from the army under any conditions.

Sheriff Who Besieged Outlaw Called Coward.

G. T. Armstrong and R. H. Jackson, lawyers, of Jamestown, N. Y., are preparing to file charges of cowardice against Sheriff C. A. Anderson with Governor Glynn as the basis for an application for the sheriff's removal from office. Anderson has been freely criticized for his part in the case of Edward Beardsley, the hunter outlaw.

Beardsley gave himself up to the county officials after he had barricaded himself in his cabin and had kept a posse off for eight days. Beardsley shot Overseer of the Poor Putnam, when the latter, accompanied by the sheriff, went to take Beardsley's children, who were said to be in want. It is contended that Anderson might have captured Beardsley at that time, but that he ran away, and that he should have made Beardsley surrender much sooner.

Prison for New York Gunman.

"Dopey Benny" Fein, one of the most notorious gunmen in New York, has been sentenced to serve five years at hard labor in Sing Sing prison. It was the maximum sentence for Fein's offense, assaulting an officer and carrying a revolver.

Blind Boy at Head of a Class of 145.

William R. Schenck, of Bayside, L. I., a blind boy, 18 years old, was graduated recently at the De Witt Clinton High School at the head of his class of 145 boys. He walked to the front of the platform, with as happy a smile as any of his classmates, to receive his honors. His bearing was confident when he got up to give an address. Young Schenck won his honors by hard work. He has received much sympathy because of his affliction, but he has not asked for it.

Schenck was one of four boys of the class who were entitled to "high honors" because in class standing they had obtained more than 90 per cent. Of the four, Schenck stood highest. In his four years at De Witt Clinton his average standing was more than 90 per cent. He moreover won special honors in four subjects. He received the highest mark in the Regents' examination in English. He has won a State scholarship amounting to $100. He has not specialized, but has taken the general school course except in drawing.

Schenck is a son of Daniel Schenck, of Bayside. The boy has been blind practically all of his life. In grammar school he made a record for scholarship. He always has attended regular classes, but has used books prepared for the blind. He is especially fond of history, and in De Witt Clinton his average standing in this study was more than 90 per cent. In two respects he has been badly handicapped all through his school course. He has been unable to take instruction in drawing and in physical training. He was, however, one of the best debaters in De Witt Clinton, and was a member of the debating team and represented his school in a debate at Cooper Union.

The boy travels from his home on Long Island to New York each day unaccompanied. He walks to the railroad station in Bayside alone, except for the company of friends he may meet upon the way. Every morning at the top of the escalator in the Pennsylvania Station one of his mates has been accustomed to meet him and accompany him to the school. There have been plenty of volunteers for this duty, for young Schenck was a favorite with his classmates.

Schenck now intends to study law, and an effort may be made to get him a scholarship in Columbia, for it is his desire to enter the law school there.

"Schenck is one of the best pupils that De Witt Clinton has turned out," said one of his teachers. "His honors came as the result of his own effort. The boy has not only a brilliant mind, but he has a capacity for work and study. We are justly proud of him. If he takes up the study of law he will forge to the front, in spite of his physical handicap."

Sea-going Church for Puget Sound.

Shipbuilding companies have been asked to tender bids for the construction of a floating church for the American Baptist Publication Society, for use for seventy thousand inhabitants of Puget Sound who live in island communities or small settlements along the shores of the sound, and who are now without a church. The craft will be christened the *Robert G. Seymour*, in memory of the late Bible secretary of the society.

Would Expel Yale "Dregs."

A strong plea for higher scholarship requirements is made and drastic action in the case of the man who fails to maintain a passing mark in his studies is made by the Yale *News*. It advocates the expulsion from college of a student who has failed in his studies, instead of dropping him to the class below, as is the custom now.

Referring to the intellectually laggard as "the dregs," the *News* declares: "In the treatment of the deficient, Yale

University shows too much mercy. The passing mark is within the reach of everybody not publicly confined. It is ridiculously low. Yet, for not achieving it, either through indifference or superhuman dullness, almost nobody is ever expelled. The dregs merely gravitate. The expulsion of the dregs might have a beneficent effect upon those nearing that level."

Fells Man, Judge Applauds.

John Sheridan, 40 years old, arrested in Philadelphia on a charge made by two girls, was held in $500 bail.

As two policemen were about to lead him back to a cell the mother of one of the girls knocked him down.

"Let that woman alone," said the magistrate to the police when they tried to drag her away. Then to the woman: "Madam, I did not see what you did, but it's a pity you haven't a baseball bat with you."

President's Daughter Brave Climber.

Miss Margaret Wilson, youngest daughter of the president, has demonstrated that a woman can climb a ship's ladder from a revenue cutter to a liner's deck in a choppy sea.

Miss Wilson's sister, Jessie, who was married to Francis B. Sayre, returned from her honeymoon trip on the liner *Majestic*, and Miss Margaret Wilson, escorted by Dudley Field Malone, collector of the port of New York, went down the bay on the revenue cutter *Manhattan* to meet the young bride and bridegroom.

When the cutter ran alongside the *Majestic* at quarantine Mr. and Mrs. Sayres were leaning over the rail watching for Miss Margaret. The ladder was run out, just an ordinary ship's ladder, such as inspectors climb every day. Mr. Malone regarded it dubiously.

"Um—er—it's rather choppy, Miss Wilson," he said.

"Not a bit of it," laughed Miss Wilson. "I'm a capital climber."

She started to place her foot on the lowest rung, but Mr. Malone detained her until Second Officer Simpson, of the liner, came down with a bight of rope to act as a handline on the bobbing, jumping ladder.

Then, with the rope fastened under her arms to steady her if she should lose her footing, and with the officer close behind her to hold her should she falter, Miss Wilson nimbly ascended the sea stairway.

Mr. and Mrs. Sayre, both in wet-weather costume, looked radiant, and declared nothing they had seen abroad looked as good to them as New York.

Lies Over Stove; Roasts to Death.

Peter Olson, a railroad employee, of Morrisville, Pa., roasted himself to death by lying on an ironing board which he placed over a gas stove. He turned on all the burners and placed a heavy overcoat over himself. He was dead when his wife found him.

Federal Got Poor Players.

Governor Tener, president of the National League, who declared recently that he welcomed a test case to prove that William Killifer, the catcher, is the property of the Philadelphia club and that whatever agreement the player made with the Chicago Federal League Club was not binding, later commented at length upon the Federals and the players said to have been obtained by that league.

"With the exception of Tinker and Knabe," he said, "the players obtained by the opposition have been either discards or players of such mediocre attainments that their absence won't hurt the club they deserted. I am happy to say that no good player in his zenith has been induced to jump.

"There is something deeply significant in this fact. It shows that the players with a future, or players in their prime, have too much foresight to jeopardize their careers by being moved by the visionary schemes of the outlaw promoters.

"The mainstay of the Federals is Weegham, of Chicago. He is immensely popular, they tell me, and is not in baseball for the money. He is simply a real fan, and when he couldn't get a major-league franchise he allied himself with the outlaws. Weegham is the live wire of the league, but he can't assume all the burdens of the enterprise himself.

"I wasn't at all surprised when I read that John Barbour was going to retire as president of the Pittsburgh Federal League Club. I never thought he could devote his time to putting an outlaw league on its feet. He has too many other interests for that. Barbour and I went to school together in Pittsburgh, and he is the first boy I can recall who ever caught my curves. His resignation will hurt the Pittsburgh Federals in many ways."

House Falls on Bridal Party During Dance.

A bride and a groom are in a hospital at Aurora, Ill., and twenty guests at their wedding are nursing broken bones or bruises, the result of an accident when the nuptial celebration was at its height. The house collapsed while the bride and groom and the guests were dancing the tango.

Mrs. Florence Bish, the bride, received internal injuries and a sprained arm. Joseph Bish, the groom, has a broken arm, sprained ankle, and probable internal injuries. The attending physician said the bride might die.

Shoots Horse, Saves a Life.

But for the presence of mind of James Winfield in shooting one of his horses that was running away and dragging Winfield's son after him, the youth would have been killed. The boy had been riding on his father's farm, near Leduc, Canada, when the animal became frightened and the boy was thrown. As he fell his right foot remained in the stirrup.

Lusty Baby Sent Sixty Miles by Mail.

A lusty, kicking infant was delivered by parcel post at Hoquiam, Wash. The "package," which weighed twenty pounds, was sent by Assistant Postmaster Jesse Havens prepaid from Olympia to the home of a relative here, the mother having been taken ill. Miss Eva Smith, a postal clerk, saw to it that the bundle reached its destination. The distance is about 60 miles.

Rider Agents Wanted

in each town to ride and exhibit sample Ranger bicycles. *Write for our latest special offer.*
Finest Guaranteed 1914 Models **$10 to $27**
with Coaster-Brake, Puncture-Proof tires.
1912 & 1913 Models all of best makes..... **$7 to $12**
100 Second-Hand Wheels
All makes and models, good as new..... **$3 to $8**
Great FACTORY CLEARING SALE
We ***Ship on Approval*** *without a cent deposit, pay the freight, and allow*
10 DAYS FREE TRIAL.
TIRES, coaster-brake rear wheels, lamps, sundries, parts and repairs *at half usual prices.* DO NOT BUY until you get our catalogue and offer. *Write now.*
MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. F345 Chicago, Ill.

The Nick Carter Stories

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY — BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS

When it comes to detective stories worth while, the **Nick Carter Stories** contain the only ones that should be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the working of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer. The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world and the stories of his adventures are read eagerly by millions in twenty different languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the **Nick Carter Stories.** It proves conclusively that they are the best.

We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

666—Nick Carter's Master Struggle.
667—The Air-shaft Specter.
668—The Broken Latch.
669—Nick Carter's Sudden Peril.
670—The Man with the Missing Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter.
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure.
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—The Vampire's Prey.
681—The Policy King Baffled.
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Secret Thread.
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
687—The Westervelt Option.
688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery.
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
692—Doctor Quartz Again.
693—The Famous Case of Doctor Quartz.
694—The Chemical Clue.
695—The Prison Cipher.
696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz.
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery.
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
705—The Collodion Stain.
707—Rogues of the Air.
708—The Bolt from the Blue.
710—The Stockbridge Affair.
711—A Secret from the Past.
712—Playing the Last Hand.
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
716—The Ghost of Bare-faced Jimmy.
717—The Master Rogue's Alibi.
719—The Dead Letter.
720—The Allerton Millions.
722—The House of Whispers.
725—The Blue Room Mystery.
728—The Mummy's Head.
729—The Statue Clue.
730—The Torn Card.
731—Under Desperation's Spur.
732—The Connecting Link.
733—The Abduction Syndicate.
736—The Toils of a Siren.
737—The Mark of a Circle.
738—A Plot Within a Plot.
739—The Dead Accomplice.
740—A Mysterious Robber.
741—The Green Scarab.
742—The Strangest Case on Record.
743—A Shot in the Dark.
746—The Secret Entrance.
747—The Cavern Mystery.
748—The Disappearing Fortune.
749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
753—The Man With a Crutch.
754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
757—Out for Vengeance.
758—The Poisons of Exili.
759—The Antique Vial.
760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—"The Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
765—The Babbington Case.
766—The Masters of Millions.
767—The Blue Stain.
768—The Lost Clew.
769—The Midnight Message.
770—The Turn of a Card.
771—A Message in the Dust.
772—A Royal Flush.
773—The Metal Casket Mystery.
774—The Great Buddha Beryl.
775—The Vanishing Heiress.
776—The Unfinished Letter.
777—A Difficult Trail.
778—A Six-word Puzzle.
779—Dr. Quartz.
780—Dr. Quartz's Oath.
781—The Fate of Dr. Quartz.
782—A Woman's Stratagem.
783—The Cliff Castle Affair.
784—A Prisoner of the Tomb.
785—A Resourceful Foe.
786—The Heir of Dr. Quartz.
787—Dr. Quartz, the Second.
788—Dr. Quartz II. at Bay.
789—The Great Hotel Tragedies.
790—Zanoni, the Witch.
791—A Vengeful Sorceress.
792—The Prison Demon.
793—Doctor Quartz on Earth Again.
794—Doctor Quartz's Last Play.
795—Zanoni, the Transfigured.
796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
800—A Plot for a Crown.
801—The Red Button.
802—Up Against It.
803—The Gold Certificate.
804—Jack Wise's Hurry Call.
805—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase.
806—Nick Carter and the Broken Dagger.
807—Nick Carter's Advertisement.
808—The Kregoff Necklace.
809—The Footprints on the Rug.
810—The Copper Cylinder.
811—Nick Carter and the Nihilists.
812—Nick Carter and the Convict Gang.
813—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor.
814—The Triangled Coin.
815—Ninety-nine—and One.
816—Coin Number 77.
817—In the Canadian Wilds.
818—The Niagara Smugglers.
819—The Man Hunt.

NEW SERIES

NICK CARTER STORIES

1—The Man from Nowhere.
2—The Face at the Window.
3—A Fight for a Million.
4—Nick Carter's Land Office.
5—Nick Carter and the Professor.
6—Nick Carter as a Mill Hand.
7—A Single Clew.
8—The Emerald Snake.
9—The Currie Outfit.
10—Nick Carter and the Kidnaped Heiress.
11—Nick Carter Strikes Oil.
12—Nick Carter's Hunt for a Treasure.
13—A Mystery of the Highway.
14—The Silent Passenger.
15—Jack Dreen's Secret.
16—Nick Carter's Pipe Line Case.
17—Nick Carter and the Gold Thieves.
18—Nick Carter's Auto Chase.
19—The Corrigan Inheritance.
20—The Keen Eye of Denton.
21—The Spider's Parlor.
22—Nick Carter's Quick Guess.
23—Nick Carter and the Murderess.
24—Nick Carter and the Pay Car.
25—The Stolen Antique.
26—The Crook League.
27—An English Cracksman.
28—Nick Carter's Still Hunt.
29—Nick Carter's Electric Shock.
30—Nick Carter and the Stolen Duchess.
31—The Purple Spot.
32—The Stolen Groom.
33—The Inverted Cross.
34—Nick Carter and Keno McCall.
35—Nick Carter's Death Trap.
36—Nick Carter's Siamese Puzzle.
37—The Man Outside.
38—The Death Chamber.
39—The Wind and the Wire.
40—Nick Carter's Three Cornered Chase.
41—Dazaar, the Arch-Fiend.
42—The Queen of the Seven.
43—Crossed Wires.
44—A Crimson Clew.
45—The Third Man.
46—The Sign of the Dagger.
47—The Devil Worshipers.
48—The Cross of Daggers.
49—At Risk of Life.
50—The Deeper Game.
51—The Code Message.
52—The Last of the Seven.
53—Ten-Ichi, the Wonderful.
54—The Secret Order of Associated Crooks.
55—The Golden Hair Clew.
56—Back From the Dead.
57—Through Dark Ways.
58—When Aces Were Trumps.
59—The Gambler's Last Hand.
60—The Murder at Linden Fells.
61—A Game for Millions.
62—Under Cover.
63—The Last Call.
64—Mercedes Danton's Double.
65—The Millionaire's Nemesis.
66—A Princess of the Underworld.
67—The Crook's Blind.
68—The Fatal Hour.
69—Blood Money.
70—A Queen of Her Kind.
71—Isabel Benton's Trump Card.
72—A Princess of Hades.
73—A Prince of Plotters.
74—The Crook's Double.
75—For Life and Honor.
76—A Compact With Dazaar.
77—In the Shadow of Dazaar. Dated March 7th, 1914.
78—The Crime of a Money King. Dated March 14th, 1914.
79—Birds of Prey. Dated March 21st, 1914.
80—The Unknown Dead. Dated March 28th, 1914.
81—The Severed Hand.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS PER COPY. If you want any back numbers of our weeklies and cannot procure them from your news dealer, they can be obtained direct from this office. Postage stamps taken the same as money.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK CITY